

**A MIXED-METHOD STUDY  
USING A MULTIMEDIA INTERVENTION TO  
EXPLORE SEX AND RELATIONSHIP  
EDUCATION WITHIN FAMILIES**

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Doctor of Philosophy**

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## ***For my father and husband:***

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my late father; Malcolm and my husband; Ian. Although it is not conventional to use lyrics to illustrate feelings in a thesis the following words say everything and show how these two men have helped make it possible for me to complete a doctorate. I love them dearly and am eternally grateful to them both.

### ***Love and support shown by Dad to his daughter Tiece***

*When troubles come and my heart burdened be  
Then, I am still and wait here in the silence  
Until you come and sit a while with me*

*You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains  
You raise me up, to walk on stormy seas  
I am strong, when I am on your shoulders  
You raise me up: To more than I can be*

*There is no life – no life without its hunger  
Each restless heart beats so imperfectly  
But when you come and I am filled with wonder  
Sometimes, I think I glimpse eternity*

*You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains  
You raise me up, to walk on stormy seas  
I am strong, when I am on your shoulders  
You raise me up: To more than I can be*

*You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains  
You raise me up, to walk on stormy seas  
I am strong, when I am on your shoulders  
You raise me up: To more than I can be*

*You raise me up: To more than I can be  
You raise me up: To more than I can be*

Lyrics of Westlife – YOU RAISE ME UP (2005).

***Ian,  
You are my life. I love you more than all the worlds.***

*For all those times you stood by me  
For all the truth that you made me see  
For all the joy you brought to my life  
For all the wrong that you made right  
For every dream you made come true  
For all the love I found in you  
I'll be forever thankful baby  
You're the one who held me up  
Never let me fall  
You're the one who saw me through it all*

*You were my strength when I was weak  
You were my voice when I couldn't speak  
You were my eyes when I couldn't see  
You saw the best there was in me  
Lifted me up when I couldn't reach  
You gave me faith 'coz you believed  
I'm everything I am  
Because you loved me*

*You gave me wings and made me fly  
You touched my hand I could touch the sky  
I lost my faith, you gave it back to me  
You said no star was out of reach  
You stood by me and I stood tall  
I had your love I had it all  
I'm grateful for each day you gave me  
Maybe I don't know that much  
But I know this much is true  
I was blessed because I was loved by you*

*You were my strength when I was weak  
You were my voice when I couldn't speak  
You were my eyes when I couldn't see  
You saw the best there was in me  
Lifted me up when I couldn't reach*

*You gave me faith 'coz you believed*

*I'm everything I am*

*Because you loved me*

*You were always there for me*

*The tender wind that carried me*

*A light in the dark shining your love into my life*

*You've been my inspiration*

*Through the lies you were the truth*

*My world is a better place because of you*

*You were my strength when I was weak*

*You were my voice when I couldn't speak*

*You were my eyes when I couldn't see*

*You saw the best there was in me*

*Lifted me up when I couldn't reach*

*You gave me faith 'coz you believed*

*I'm everything I am*

*Because you loved me*

*I'm everything I am*

*Because you loved me*

Lyrics of Celine Dion – BECAUSE YOU LOVED ME (1996).

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I thank my husband's parents; Ma and Pa for their love, support and kindness over the last ten years of my studies. You both have a marvellous sense of humour and have made me laugh when I was often so stressed.

I thank my Boys for making me smile, giving me cuddles and for keeping me fit. This has contributed to keeping me strong and allowing me to achieve all that I have.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank my husband and late father; Ian and Malcolm, for their love, support and for believing in me. I also thank my dad for making me the person I am, and I thank and cherish Ian for allowing me to be that person without judgement or criticism. I dedicate this thesis to you both, with all of my love.

## **EDITORIAL STYLE**

This thesis employs the editorial style of the American Psychological Association (APA) as detailed in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5<sup>th</sup> edition). However, the thesis uses British English spelling, except for when direct quotes are used which may use American English spelling.

## **ABSTRACT**

Sex education in Britain is poorly practised, in schools as well as in the home. British so called 'Puritanism' has been seen as one of the reasons. At a time and age when teenage pregnancy, Sexual Transmitted Infections (STIs) and viruses (AIDS/HIV) are on the increase more attention to the education of sexual behaviour is needed. Government initiatives are leading in that direction for schools as well as families, but it is unclear how these are materialised. Especially, how families discuss sexual matters is under-researched and poorly understood. Therefore, the aims of this study were to explore the potential facilitators and barriers of the communication of sexual topics, with and without the use of a Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) multimedia program, and to explore the impact of this program on the knowledge of sexual issues and concerns. A mixed-method design was employed by using Strauss and Corbin's (1998) modified grounded theory to develop a model reflecting the findings. Knowledge was assessed on data gathered from twenty British families over a ten-month period. Using semi-structured interviews, observational field notes and quantitative measures, it was found that trust, respect, spending (leisure) time together and children's perception of their parents' sexual knowledge were facilitators for sexual communications. Older siblings and other family members who were regarded as role models also facilitated the discussion of sexual matters. The barriers for discussing sexual issues openly within families included authoritative parenting, lack of parental sexual knowledge, presence of younger siblings and parents' direct questioning of children's personal relationships. In light of this, the multimedia program could be beneficial in many more families when initiating and communicating sexual matters.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| <b>DfEE</b>   | Department for Education and Employment      |
| <b>DfES</b>   | Department for Education and Skills          |
| <b>DCFS</b>   | Department of Children, Families and Schools |
| <b>DH</b>     | Department of Health                         |
| <b>GB</b>     | Great Britain                                |
| <b>HIV</b>    | Human Immunodeficiency Virus                 |
| <b>OfSTED</b> | Office for Standards in Education            |
| <b>PSHE</b>   | Personal, Social and Health Education        |
| <b>QCA</b>    | Qualifications and Curriculum Authority      |
| <b>SRE</b>    | Sex and Relationship Education               |
| <b>STI</b>    | Sexually Transmitted Infections              |
| <b>UK</b>     | United Kingdom                               |
| <b>USA</b>    | United States of America                     |

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# PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

## Conferences

Completed PhD analyses were presented at the 11th ESC Congress, The Hague, The Netherlands on the 19-22 May, 2010.

Completed PhD analyses of data were presented at the International Perspectives on The ABC of Sex and Relationships Education; Approaches, Benefits and Constraints at the sre2009 Conference, International Convention, Birmingham, 7<sup>th</sup> September, 2009.

Preliminary analyses of the data were presented at the 21st European Health Psychology Society Conference on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2007 at Maastricht University, The Netherlands, with satellite events at Hasselt University, Belgium.

Preliminary analyses of the data have been presented at the 6th Qualitative Research Conference in Health and Social Care. Bournemouth University, Christchurch Road, Bournemouth, BH1 3LT, 5<sup>th</sup> September, 2006.

Thesis details were presented at the School of Health research event at the University of Teesside, Middlesbrough, TS1 3BA on the 20<sup>th</sup> April, 2005.

## Publications

Turnbull, T., van Wersch, A., and van Schaik, P. (2010). Evaluation of Sex and Relationship Education in the Family Context using an Interactive CD-ROM: A Grounded Theory Approach. *European Journal of Contraception and Reproductive Health Care*. 15(1), 95-96. **(Published)**.

Turnbull, T., van Wersch, A., and van Schaik, P. (2008). Adolescents' preferences regarding sex and relationship education. *Education & Health*, 69(3), 1-10. **(Published)**.

Turnbull, T., van Wersch, A. and van Schaik, P. (2007). Sex Education in the British Family Context: Grounded Theory Approach. *Health Psychology Review*, 1(1), 20-21. **(Published)** Also available at [www.ehps2007.com](http://www.ehps2007.com).

Turnbull, T., van Wersch, A., and van Schaik, P. (2007). Sex education in the family context. *Health Education Journal*, 67(3), 182-195. **(Published)**.

Turnbull, P., van Wersch, A. and Papastefanou, S.L. (2005). Living with Scoliosis: A Test Case Report. *Cleveland Medical Journal*, 6, 36-39. **(Published)**.

Van Schaik, P., Turnbull, T. and van Wersch, A. (2004). Presence within a Mixed Reality Environment. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 7, (5), 743-791. **(Published)**.

## **PERSONAL STATEMENT**

Whilst embarking on this research study I worked full-time for fifteen months as the Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) Development Coordinator for the Middlesbrough area. Working for the Middlesbrough Teenage Pregnancy Strategy not only provided me with the essential background knowledge to carry out the research but, it allowed me to become a competent, and knowledgeable worker in the field of SRE.

In my role as the SRE Development Coordinator I was responsible for working with schools, sexual-health agencies and the Primary Care Trust (PCT) to provide an effective inter-agency approach to teaching effective SRE to children and young people in a bid to reduce teenage pregnancies and STIs. It was my aim to ensure children and young people were given the sexual-health information needed so they could keep safe, be responsible and make informed choices over their personal relationships and sexual behaviour. As a means of achieving this I would work with primary and secondary schools to ensure SRE policies were in place and support them in the SRE they provided to pupils. This included training teachers and sexual-health workers to teach SRE effectively using different resources, including the one that was used for the present research study. I also coordinated the SRE roadshow whereby I, along with a team of sexual-health workers, would deliver SRE sessions within schools that mirrored the expectations of government SRE guidance and school policies. This also involved parents so that they had an appreciation of what sexual topics were taught to their children. The whole experience was invaluable because it gave me an insight into how schools approached SRE, how they involved parents and how the expectations of young people were met.

Although working as the SRE Development Coordinator for the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy gave me an exceptional amount of insight that was beneficial for the PhD research, it also provided me with the up-to-date knowledge of how SRE was taught in practice. The experience also allowed me to become more confident and broaden my skills to become an SRE Consultant. This has included using my previous knowledge and the knowledge gained from the PhD research to advice and support others delivering SRE to children and young people. The ultimate goal has been to achieve an over-arching approach to teaching effective SRE to children and young people by involving sexual-health agencies, schools and parents. I have been successfully used this approach in providing feedback based on the findings from the PhD research to the company responsible for developing the multimedia program used in the research. The information provided in the review (please see [www.sensecds.com](http://www.sensecds.com)) has been developed upon further to produce another multimedia program that is now being used to teach and involve parents in the SRE that is taught in England, Scotland and Wales.

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# CHAPTER 1

---

## INTRODUCTION

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| 1.2 | RATIONALE FOR THE PRESENT STUDY | 2 |

## **1.1 OVERVIEW**

This chapter presents an outline of the current sex education status in England and the important impact parents can have on their children's sexual knowledge, attitudes and behaviour. Research will also be portrayed to highlight the issues surrounding the reasons for not discussing sexual matters within the family. This will be followed by emphasising the importance of the present study.

## **1.2 RATIONALE FOR THE PRESENT STUDY**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century various research studies have demonstrated increasing concerns about the sexual risk-taking behaviour of adolescents in Britain (Aten, Siegel, Enhaaro, & Auinger, 2002; Blake, Simkin, Ledsky, Perkins, & Calabrese, 2001; Michels, Kropp, Eyre, & Halpern-Felsher, 2005; Royal College of Nursing Sexual Health Forum, 2005; Sales, Spitalnick, Milhausen, Wingood, DiClemente et al. 2009; Tripp & Viner, 2005). Evidence suggesting that young people are becoming more sexually active and consequently that unintended pregnancies, abortions and STIs rates (in particular chlamydia and gonorrhoea) are rising (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2000, 2001; Gomez & Santolaya, 2005; Robinson & Rogstad, 2002). To assist in the prevention of these behaviours it has been argued that more sex education is needed (DiCenso, Guyatt, Willan, & Griffith, 2002; Ejidokun, McNulty, Liannane, & Ramaiah, 1999; Ingham, 2001; Lynch & Blake, 2004; McElderry & Omar, 2003; Wight Raab, Abraham, Buston, & Hart, 2002).

In the United Kingdom (UK) the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE, 2000), which is now known as the Department of Children, Families and Schools (DCFS), is responsible for developing the most recent guidance and implementing current legislation for SRE within primary and secondary schools

(DiCenso, Guyatt, & Willan, 2002b). The SRE guidance indicates how schools in England should deliver effective sex-education programs, and schools are now strongly encouraged to follow these recommendations (DfEE, 2000). According to the Office for Standards in Education (OfSTED) (2002) the SRE guidance is recognised and regarded as good practice in that it forms the basis for good quality sex education. Although OfSTED has a comprehensive system of inspection and regulation that corresponds with the British government's aim to provide better and more effective SRE to young people, they recommend that schools should take a unified approach to teaching SRE with the support of healthcare professionals and, more importantly, the involvement of parents.

The role of parents in education has been formalised by the DfEE (2000) for the following reasons: parents are seen as the most important people who are not just able to educate their children about issues relating to sex and relationships, but who complement and maintain the culture and ethos of the family. Parents support the emotional and physical aspects of their children's health and assist in preparing their children for adult life. In order to complement these objectives, the DfEE aimed to strike a balance between schools and the values of each family by encompassing all aspects of sex education. They provided a definition to this affect, which is:

*“It is lifelong learning about physical, moral and emotional development. It is about the understanding of the importance of marriage for family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care. It is also about the teaching of sex, sexuality, and sexual health. It is not about the promotion of sexual orientation or sexual activity – this would be inappropriate teaching.”*

(DfEE, 2000).

Although schools are encouraged to involve parents in the SRE they deliver, previous research has suggested that some parents demur from discussing particular

topics (e.g. sexuality) with their children (Dilorio, Hockenberry-Eaton, Maibach, Rivero, & Miller, 1996; Gabb, 2004; Jordan, Price & Fitzgerald, 2000; Kahlbaugh, Lefkowitz, Valdez, & Sigman, 1997; Kakavoulis, 2001; King & Lorusso, 1997; Lefkowitz, Kahlbaugh, Au, & Sigman, 1998; Rosenthal & Feldman, 1999) especially fathers (Feldman & Rosenthal, 2000; Goldman and Bradley, 2004; Kirkman, 2003; Lefkowitz, Roma, Corona, Au & Sigman, 2000a; Lefkowitz, Sigman, & Au, 2000; Lehr, Demi, Dilorio, & Facticeau, 2005; Miller, Dilorio & Dudley, 2002). It has been suggested that parents feel unable to discuss these topics, such as sexuality, as they fear that they are not equipped with both the necessary skills and the knowledge to educate their children (Werner-Wilson & Fitzharris, 2001).

In the UK many myths, misconceptions and taboo subjects are associated with some sexual topics (Krafchick & Biringen, 2002). These have existed for generations and to a certain extent still exist today. For example, a survey commissioned by the DCSF in 2009 revealed that from 2,000 people aged 16 to 50, 11% of people thought that a women can not get pregnant when standing up; 19% of women were not aware they could get pregnant whilst on their period; 37% of people never talk about contraception; 27% revealed being too embarrassed to ask questions relating to sexual issues and 25% expressed how they wished that they could talk more openly about sex and relationships. This illustrates that the embarrassment and ignorance of British people is still apparent. This is especially so compared to other countries such a Germany, France and the Netherlands who are more liberal and talk about sexual topics openly (Lewis & Knijn, 2001).

Although research indicates that children learn SRE topics by attending school and talking to their parents (mainly the mother), recent research (Masters, 2005;



Strasburger, 2005) has shown that young people (both boys and girls) are increasingly using media sources to learn about sex and sexual matters. Consequently, these are often in the form of pornography-related websites and pornographic magazines (Rosen & Petty, 1995; Flowers-Coulson, Kushner, & Bankowski, 2000; Barak & Fisher, 2001). This moves away from providing good-quality sex education, which emphasises the importance of romantic relationships in which two people interact based on personal relations involving responsibility and commitment. Although some Internet sources do not instil the appropriate messages needed to educate adolescents about sexual matters, it is not surprising that young people are using computers to educate themselves. An important reason is that computers play a large role in young people's lives in relation to what and how they learn at school as well as the computer games they play in their leisure time (Cherney, 2008; Greenfield, 2009; Griffiths, 2004; Kinzie, 2008; van Schaik, Turnbull & van Wersch, 2004). This opens up opportunities for sex education provided by means of computers.

In that case it will be useful that parents and educating adults feel comfortable and skilled enough to communicate sex and relationship issues with their children. Open communications in countries such as the Netherlands where sexual matters are discussed have revealed the benefits in low numbers of teenage pregnancies, abortions and STIs (Van Loon, 2003).

Parent programmes have been found to improve open sexual communications in families. For example, in the United States of America (USA) specific programmes have been designed to educate parents about sexual topics so they can teach their own children about sexual matters (Klein, 2000; Santelli, Otta, Lyon, & Summers, 2006). Although the approach to SRE taken in the USA is different than that taken in other

countries due to religious commitments the parent programmes have been shown to be successful in increasing parent-child sexual communications. However, if these were to be used in the UK, government initiatives would need to be put in place to support parents, as they will be taught in an era which is different from how they were taught themselves (Santellces-Cuevas & Astroza, 2002; Sawyer, Marrese, Scicchitano, Lehman, & Bhuyan, 2003; Turnbull, van Wersch & van Schaik, 2008).

In the present study, communications in the family will be explored as it stands, as well as with the application of a sex education programme on the computer. In what follows, this programme will be described.

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## **CHAPTER 2**

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### **THE HISTORY OF SEX AND SEXUALITY**

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## **2.1 OVERVIEW**

This thesis has so far highlighted the importance of effective sex education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and how sexual communication within families is essential for developing in children the knowledge required to make informed choices concerning their sexual behaviour and personal relationships. In order to understand the potential facilitators and barriers that exist within families for these sexual conversations to take place it is important to understand the historical and contextual factors that have led to the topic of sex and sexuality, as we know it today. This chapter will therefore provide an insight into the evolution and revolution of sex and sexual behaviour before discussing the various movements and legislations that have occurred in relation to sex and sexuality.

## **2.2 EVOLUTION AND REVOLUTION IN SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR**

Evolution is defined as “*changes over time in organic (living) structure*” (Buss, 1999). This not only refers to the changes in humans, but other species as well, including those that may now be extinct. Evolution, in this sense, has caused much intrigue and anticipation over the decades, especially between biologists seeking to explain changes in life forms of animals (Cuvier, 1798; Lamarck, 1809). In the early 1800s it was accepted that many species existed, which had various characteristics, allowing for survival (e.g. birds had beaks to crack nuts and giraffes had long necks so they could reach the highest leaves on trees). Furthermore, life was not a fixed process but instead changing over time. However, it was not known how different species arrived or how they changed over time. That was until Darwin presented his theory to explain the biological phenomena.

In 2009, we celebrate 150 years since the publication of Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* (1859), which inaugurated a theoretical, philosophical and scientific revolution known as the theory of evolution. According to Darwin (1859) selection occurs when organisms have inheritable differences, which allow for more offspring to be developed because of their unique qualities to survive and/or reproduce. Although heritable characteristics may help with survival, essentially it is the reproduction of inherited qualities, which form the basis for future generations. Darwin (1859) termed this as differential reproductive success, as it is essential that these heritable variables are passed onto the next generation allowing for each species to survive. Although Darwin (1859) provided an impressive explanation, and a theory of natural selection, others were less impressed by its arrival, condemning Darwin's theory and creating a whirlwind of controversy (Cronin, 1991; Huxely, 1942). The most well-known of these critics is Richard Dawkins (1979, 1982, 1986) who proposed his own theory on inheritance, which was later rejected on the basis of evidence (Buss, 1999). However, at the same time there was continuous support for Darwin's theory of natural selection (Wade, 1997; Wrangham & Peterson, 1996). This is mainly because the theory (1) provided an explanation for the modifications in organic (living) structures and the changes over time and (2) explained the purpose and qualities that organic structures have and their ability to survive and reproduce.

It is universally accepted that genes are responsible for hereditary traits, which occur through sexual reproduction, making each of us unique (Human Genome Project, 2005). Genetic research has allowed for a greater understanding of cells and how they aid in the process of sexual reproduction. However, Darwin's (1859) theory of natural selection went some way further in allowing scientists to explain the nature

of inheritance and social behaviour. Since this time more attention has been given towards the value of adaptive behaviour, kin selection (Hamilton, 1964a; 1964b) reciprocal altruism (Trivers, 1971), group cooperation (Hardin, 1968; Krebs & Denton, 1997; Sherif, 1966; Tajfel, 1982; Williams, 1966) group selection (Horgan, 1996; Tesser & Martin, 1996; Wilson, 1975) and sexual attraction (Buss, 1989; Cunningham, 1986; Kendrick and Simpson, 1997; Singh, 1993); all of which have been beneficial in understanding human sexual behaviour.

Following the theoretical traditions of Darwin (1959) it is the ancestral nature that encourages intersexual (male and female) or otherwise known as heterosexual relationships so males and females can reproduce. This has become a cultural norm for centuries; however, Freud (1905) and more recently Kinsey (1948) also questioned the sexual behaviour in homosexual relationships (same-sex). The latter caused outrage as Kinsey, Pomeroy & Martin's (1948) and Kinsey, Pomeroy, Martin and Gebhard's (1953) research also found that men and women can be attracted to, and do have sexual 'intercourse' (with or without tools) with both sexes (bisexuality). Other sexual behaviours and/or acts have also been frowned upon such as bestiality (sex between a person and an animal), sadism (sexual arousal through inflicting pain) on other(s), masochism (sexual arousal by inflicting pain on oneself) and paedophilia (an adult having sexual feelings and/or sex with a child). These paraphilic behaviours and others have predominantly been found to occur in men (Kinsey et al. 1948, Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 1994) and almost half of diagnosed paraphiliacs are married (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 2000). However, as previously indicated, these types of relationships are not the norm when discussing sexual behaviours. 'The norm' for men and women has become the

so-called nuclear family for political, social and security reasons (Williams, Sawyer, Wahlstrom, 2005), formed of husband, wife and their children. However, casual sexual relationships or sexual relationships outside marriage have become increasingly more frequent over the decades, mainly since the First World War (Cook, 2004).

In 1921 sexual material was permitted in order to bring awareness to the STIs that occurred during times of conflict, in which soldiers were increasingly fraternising with prostitutes or loose women (Grant, 1921). This made sex a heightened subject in society where it had previously not been discussed (Bristow, 1977). Consequently, young people started to find out about where babies came from, the purpose of male and female genitalia and how sexual intercourse occurred (Cook, 2004). However, governing bodies were careful as to the amount of sexual material they produced in order not to encourage sexual behaviour (Hall & Porter, 1995). None the less this caused much curiosity and people had to be careful when having sex with the potential consequence of producing offspring as they did not have much money. This was mainly because there was no welfare state and no effective methods to aid in birth control (Warboys, 2004). After the Second World War more STIs occurred and more illegitimate children were born. As a consequence, more conservative values were disseminated across society. Developments in medicine such as penicillin to fight STIs, and the arrival of the contraceptive pill provided women with sexual confidence and therefore, sex became more widespread.

In the 1960s a sexual revolution occurred, with fewer people fearing the consequences of sex. However, young people were still not told all they needed to know about sex, due to their parent's reluctance to discuss sexual matters (Newson & Newson, 1968) and the poor, misleading sex education given at school (Cook, 2004).



In the early 1960s moral conservation in Britain maintained control over films, instilling the idea that sexual desires were threatening and shameful. Sexual conversations were repressed due to the 'restrictive economy', not permitting the subject to be discussed (Foucault, 1978, 1984). Furthermore, masturbation and homosexuality were seen as disgusting and forbidden acts, a position which was supported by government and religious sects. There were however, films such as 'Carry on ...' that were regarded as funny due to the sharp quips of Barbara Windsor, Kenneth Williams and other actors, referring to sex in an implicit way by using suggestive dialogue. This could possibly reinforce how as a culture Britain jokes about sex to take the seriousness off the subject, making it acceptable and less embarrassing to actually discuss. However, in America where sexual matters were discussed more openly, sexual films were becoming more daring, showing sexual content in more detail (Kuln, 1988).

This pattern soon developed in Britain by the late 1960s and early 1970s where sexual liberation was starting to occur (Cook, 2005). This was heightened when film directors developed the film *Growing up* in 1971, which was intended for teenagers and contained scenes on masturbation. Previously this material was regarded as explicit and was retained for adult films and pornographic male magazines, which were used by men for sexual pleasure (Kuln, 1988). Although many changes in people's sexual attitudes and behaviours during the last century occurred, in Britain the question remains: what drives humans to have full coitus, especially in casual relationships where there is no adaptive value?

### **2.3 SEX: INSTINCT OR APPETITE?**

The pure word of 'sex' has come to mean various things over the centuries. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century it was referred to as a means of differentiating between male and female bodily characteristics. Centuries later in the mid-1920s it was used to refer to sexual attraction and or sexual behaviour. In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, sex can refer to having sex, making love, fucking, or sexual relations. However, the advancements in terminology in the mid-twentieth century, especially relating to sexual behaviour led to sex becoming a vulgar word, as it became a multifaceted expression to explain various aspects of sexual behaviour, some of which were tasteless and inappropriate (e.g. pornography). It would therefore seem that 'sex' is no longer a distinct category, but instead relates to a phenomenon and an action. Due to the popularity of sex and sexual behaviours, controversy remains as to whether sex is actually an instinct or appetite.

An instinct is thought to be an urge that is directed by behaviour based on a biological need (Wright, 1969). The hormone that supports this biological need for sexual activity is testosterone (O'Leary, Malone & Tyree, 1994). Even though it has been suggested that males and females possess the same amounts of testosterone (Fletcher, 2002) men are thought to produce up to ten times more than women in a day for various reasons (e.g. sexual arousal, situations of competition and cells that build muscles). This steers away from the analogy that sexual activity is an urge such as hunger and thirst, especially as sexual arousal is more dependent upon external stimuli, than hunger and thirst are. Although evolutionary developments have suggested that sexual behaviour is associated with secretions of hormones, the relationship between hormone balance and sex drive is undistinguished (Wright, 1969).

According to Freud (1905) sex is a primary drive or sexual instinct, which is characterised by a build-up of intense energies that are then decreased by a sudden release of excitement. Freud (1905) explains these energies by theorising libido during infancy, mainly concentrating on the id, the ego and the superego. However, Freud's (1905) notions were unsubstantiated, even though they provided much discourse on the matter of sexual orientation where Freud (1905) claimed homosexuals were perverted and had a mental disorder. Human beings are not simply a response to biological needs, but also their sexual appetite (Wright, 1969).

Sexual appetite can be seen as a learned habit, which has occurred through expecting pleasure from being sexually aroused in a variety of situations. Along with one's sexual appetite come feelings, which are not inseparable from sexual appetite (e.g. comfort, shame, regret and aggression), but instead heightened through arousal when stimuli are presented. This arousal can take many forms depending on the individual. For some, it may be the touching of their genitals to gain pleasure, having full sexual intercourse to reach orgasm, or simply by viewing sexual imagery that encourages sexual thoughts. It has been found that men have a higher sex drive than women (Magdol et al. 1997) and that 54% of men think about sex every day, whereas only 19% of women do (Laumann, Gagnon, Michael & Michaels, 1994). Although some may perceive this not to be a problem, moralists and some cultural sects frown upon the media's influences that exploit stimuli which could be construed as sexually arousing. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century sexual material is seen as the norm, and is therefore hard to escape. The main point to acknowledge from the 'Sex: Instinct or appetite' debate is that emotions are involved in sexual arousal and it is therefore not reliant on just biological factors. The theory of sexual appetite (Hardy, 1964) suggests that there is a

whole array of emotions associated with sex, which can be viewed as positive (e.g. delight in skilful performance and pleasure from social status and success, etc). Whether or not the theory of sexual appetite offers an explanation for sexual drives and desires, it does show that biology on its own cannot totally explain sexual drives in a society where sexual appetites are encouraged. However, sexual pleasure and pornography have also been found to affect sex and sexual behaviours in contemporary society.

## **2.4 SEXUAL PLEASURE AND PORNOGRAPHY**

Sexual ignorance no longer exists in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to the extent it did previously. However, the mention of sexual pleasure induces a gamut of thoughts and feelings, which can include interest, intrigue, shame, guilt and also excitement. This is mainly because sexual pleasures are marked by sexual feelings, sexual attractions or desires, which can lead to sexual arousal and, sometimes, orgasm. However, sexual arousal and orgasm not only come from the act of sexual intercourse but, other activities that relate to sex when people are alone and are having private thoughts. Although sexual pleasures are unique and shared by a particular individual, they are still governed by societal rules and sexual norms as in previous centuries. The sexual ethics, morals and norms are generally steered by issues including legality, fidelity and consent to which individuals in different cultures and society are expected to conform (Cook, 2004). Although some forms of sexual pleasure (e.g. pornography) are more frowned upon than others (e.g. sexual fantasies) they have often been identified as a means of educating people about sexual matters and in the learning of their own bodies (Ciclitira, 2002).

Sexual fantasies can be thoughts about many aspects that people, as individuals, deem desirable (e.g. fame, beautiful places and money) including erotic content and taking place whilst awake and where sexual arousal occurs (Byrne, 1977; Giambra, 1974; Wagman, 1967). Nocturnal erections can similarly occur when asleep based on the same principles, which can lead to a nocturnal orgasm, otherwise known as a wet dream (Henton, 1976). This would suggest that the brain is as important as one's genitals in that what we think about can enhance or lead to a sexual response through bodily functions. However, understanding people's sexual fantasies and what content they include is under-researched mainly because eroticism is still regarded by some as politically incorrect and not a respectable function (Friday, 1974, 1975, 1980; Kronhausen & Kronhausen, 1969).

However, research has shown that men and women both have sexual fantasies (Cameron & Biber, 1973; Jones & Barlow, 1990; Lietenberg & Henning, 1995; Singer, 1966). Although some people may not wish to admit or divulge in the content of these sexual fantasies due to embarrassment, rejection or being ridiculed by society (Ellis & Symons, 1990; Gagnon & Simon, 1973), research over the last two decades has identified the sexual behaviours that men and women are likely to fantasise over (Hsu, Kling, Kessler, Knapke, Diefenbach et al. 1994). These include: touching and being touched sensually, oral and/or genital sex, caressing naked bodies, seducing or being seduced, having sex in unusual positions and having sex in unusual locations. It was also found by Hsu et al. (1994) that men were more likely to have sexual fantasies than women and that these were more venturesome (e.g. whipping or being whipped by a partner), whereas women would generally fantasise about having sex and getting married. Although it has been found that sexual fantasies can be internally generated,

research suggests that fantasies are provoked in people by something they have seen or read (Jones & Barlow, 1990).

This not only individualises the types of sexual material people are likely to read, but also causes concerns over the sexual message people are subject to. This is especially so over the last twenty years where sexual images and acts have become a firm feature in the media, commercialising pornography in magazines, films and more explosively on the Internet (Barton, 2003; Ciclitira, 2002; Richardson, 2009). These developments have also caused much controversy and challenged several aspects of society, mainly in the laws on censorship on pornography (Barton, 2003; Sigel, 2000).

The word ‘pornography’, otherwise known as ‘porn’ or ‘porno’ means the ‘depiction of whores’ first derived from Greece in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Ciclitira, 2002). At the time pornographic material was usually seen in the form of pornographic sculptures, poetry and paintings. However, more recently pornographic material can be depicted from other media, mainly photography, films, magazines and articles/viewings on the Internet (Freeman-Longo & Blanchard, 1998). Pornography is an elusive term that can mean different things to different cultures, historical and social contexts, and more so on individuals’ own experiences and beliefs (Kendrick, 1997). There is a general understanding that pornography is any sexual explicit material (visual or written) intending to cause sexual arousal (Ciclitira, 2002). Although early pornographic material caused an outcry several centuries ago with the writings of *Decameron* by Boccaccio (1313-1375) and *Fanny Hill, The Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* by Cleland, the arrival of the *Dying Slave* sculpture by Michelangelo (1513-1516) was classed as a work of art. However, by the 19<sup>th</sup> century a battle arose between pornography and censorship in that any material which was seen to be

threatening to public morality or caused sexual offensive was banned. This was brought about by the British Parliament, which passed the first Obscene Publication Act in 1957 (Bullough & Bullough, 1995). As a consequence greater policing laws were introduced against the smuggling of pornographic material and well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, as alluded to previously (see Section 2.2), the Second World War saw many changes in the history of sexual behavior and sexual attitudes and this did not exclude material that was regarded as pornographic. As a consequence of the 1960s sexual revolution publications of literature (e.g. D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and Ralph Ginzberg *Eros* fine art magazine) were accepted into Britain, closely followed by the first *Playboy* magazine in 1971 and *Playgirl* in 1972. This provided acceptability for a multitude of other soft-and hard-core pornographic magazines (e.g. Brawn *Golden Butterfly*, 1966, and *Super-8*, 1970) and movies (e.g. *Deep throat*, 1972, and *The Devil in Miss Jones*, 1974) to be seen across theatres in Britain. Pornographic material started to be seen as acceptable and eventually legalised in the USA and European countries. Changes in technology occurred and videos were produced allowing for pornographic material to be viewed in private within the home via the form of 'adult movies'. However, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century pornographic material has become acceptable and widely used.

Pornography has become a common tool that allows people to learn about sexual matters whether they want to or not, and often without the notion that they are actually viewing pornography most of the time. This has mainly become possible because of more relaxed attitude towards censorship regulations on television channels (including cable channels) and with the high usage of computers (including the Internet). Although images of the penis, vagina, anus, female nipples, slang words for

sex (e.g. 'fuck') along with hard-core sexual activity are banned on television networks before the watershed, references to sex and programmes with sexual content are all too common. The same could be said for computers and the Internet; however, this poses an even starker problem in that it is global, allowing for sexually explicit Web sites, interactive chat rooms and pornographic material to be viewed without much monitoring or regulation. Although technological changes have allowed sexually explicit material to be seen at greater ease and it is expected to become worse with futurists predicting that virtual-reality technology along with the Internet is set to provide sexual interactions between people at a distance (Rheingold, 1992). This may not seem so ludicrous especially when considering companies such as [Safesexplus.com](http://Safesexplus.com) already sell sex toys, which can be controlled by a remote control device through the Internet.

It has furthermore been found that pornography on the Internet has increased the extent of prostitution (LeVay & Valente, 2006) and that this has implications for different countries, especially in relation to sectors of the sex industry (Barton, 2003). Although pornography has had links with prostitution previously, mainly by men paying to see exotic dancing and stripping in seedy dark nightclubs, phone sex has become linked to prostitution and has become a popular form of pornography-related activity in the USA. This is mainly as it allows men to carry out their sexual fantasies in the privacy of their own homes by fraternising and becoming sexual aroused by having conversations with paid telephone operators. Other countries (e.g. New Zealand, Netherlands, Australia and the UK) have also experienced the effects of modern communications in the sex industry (Visser, Randers-Pehrson & Day, 2004) even though traditional forms of prostitution still exist (e.g. street workers). Although



prostitution is increasing around the world at a rapid pace through the decriminalising of prostitutes in the sex industry (Sassen, 2002; Vandepitte, Lyeria & Dallabetta, 2006; Ward & Day, 2004; Caroel, Slaymaker & Lyeria, 2006; Ward, Mercer & Wellings, 2005), the UK government has introduced laws and regulations to control sexual behaviour, especially in young people who are the most vulnerable (Levesque, 2002).

## **2.5 THE LEGALITY OF SEX AND SEXUALITY IN THE UNITED KINGDOM**

Legal systems endeavour to formally regulate individual's sexual activity, attitudes and behaviours associated with sex and sexuality (Levesque, 2002). The main ways in which they try to do this is by fostering rules that coincide with criminal law, civil law and child welfare law. These operate at local, national and political levels as a means of protecting adults and children throughout their entire lifespan. These laws differ considerably, placing more emphasis on protecting children and preventing them from being abused (Arias, Samios & O'Leary, 1987; Biglan, Noell, Ochs, Smolkowski & Metzler, 1995; Davis, Peck & Storment, 1993; Gamache, 1991; Himelein, Vogel & Wachowiak, 1994; Levy, 1991; Makepiece, 1997; Small & Kerns, 1993). Further ways in which children are protected legally are through the laws that relate to the sexual behaviours they consent to and whether they are competent to make these decisions.

Probably the most well known civil law that had been passed and one which has caused much controversy is the Victoria Gillick case in 1985. The House of Lords passed this law in the mid-to late 1980s, which stated that children had the right to make their own decisions over the sexual-health services they accessed, without parental knowledge and/or consent. The guidelines stated that health-care practitioners (e.g. doctors, nurses and pharmacists) could give contraceptive advice or treatment to young people if the young person understands the advice being given. Although, the

guidelines were introduced to support the rights of the child, it was seen to reduce parents' authority to the health services that could be accessed by their children. It meant that young people below the age of 16 could access contraception, have terminations and be given sexual-health advice without their parents knowing. Although, at the time these guidelines caused moral panic between parents and religious sects because it suggested acceptance for young people to have sexual intercourse from a young age, they do in one sense protect the 'innocent' whilst also giving both boys and girls the right to access contraception and sexual-health advice if they are deemed competent (Levesque, 1998, 1999). Children's right to contraception and sexual-health advice is the same for adults in that girls can access all contraceptives (including pre-and post-coital methods), be given abortions, receive sexual health screening and/or treatments. As can be imagined this has caused much resistance and condemning of parents who also by law have a parental right and obligation to protect their children from emotional, physical and psychological harm throughout childhood and the developmental years of their child's life as much as possible

As a means of protecting their children parents instil rules and norms in their children that coincide with the value system and the ethos operating within each individual family. These values can stem from religious, cultural and societal norms, which support the beliefs that make up each individual family. However, conflicts can arise when children access or require medical treatments due to the consequences associated with sexual activity (e.g. having an abortion and taking the morning after pill) and in relation to being in a sexual relationship (e.g. access contraception). This was the problem that initiated the Victoria Gillick case in 1985, especially as

intervening medical treatments (i.e. abortion) did not reflect the families value system, nor did it allow parents (in this case the mother) to support and protect their daughter when making a decision that could affect her physical, mental and emotional health. In essence, this adds weight to the importance of parents communicating and educating their children in relation on sexual matters, in the same way as schools have a legal obligation to give children effective sex education so they have the information and understanding to make informed decisions and choices over their sexual health.

How, when and what sex education schools should teach remains a contentious issue. The Sexual Offences Act (2003) states that children have the right to SRE and sexual-health support and advice (Sex Education Forum, 2004a). Although it is difficult to assess the impact schools have over the sexual behaviour of young people, it has been found that children who commit to attending school tend to delay the onset of sexual activity (Levesque, 2000). Because there are no firm laws stating what and how much SRE should be provided at school, different schools (e.g. faith and non-faith) have the freedom to implement sex education programs they so wish, without much monitoring of their effectiveness (Levesque, 2002). Agreeably, the same could be said for the media in that it is difficult to assess what sexual information young people acquire and use to benefit their own sexual health through the sexual behaviours they engage in. As already alluded to previously (see Section 2.4) the media can have a negative effect through the information it provides. However, it also gives sexual information that minors and adults are entitled to have (e.g. information about contraception and acceptable/unacceptable sexual practices). The media furthermore depict sex roles that impose social norms and how individuals should behave in society (Levesque, 2000). Although it is difficult to control people's sexual

attitudes and behaviours through laws that are imposed, the law does have immense power in that it indicates what is acceptable and unacceptable sexual behaviour (e.g. consenting to sex in contrast to rape). However, in a society that has diversified greatly in relation to sex and sexual behaviour it would seem that current school legislation needs to support the provision of sexual information that is going to be beneficial to young people and the sexual behaviours they choose to engage in. This is especially so in relation to sex education and the regulations that have been put in place to give young people the sexual knowledge to make informed choices over their sexual behaviour and sexual relationships.

## **2.6 THE REGULATION AND CONTROL OF SEX EDUCATION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM**

Historically, schools have been regarded as the principal source for children being given information on sex (Allen, 1987; Mort, 1987). Schools continue to have, an increasing effect on the sex education they provide and on how this affects young people's sexual behaviour (Wellings, 1995). However, it was not until 1986 that schools were obliged to provide formal sex education (Harris, 1990). This was due to the *Education Reform (No.2) Act* (1988) that made it mandatory for local education authorities (LEAs) to include sex education in their policies, which promoted the moral values of its time. These moral values were to mainly *promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of children at school* as a means of *'preparing them for opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life*. The *Education Reform (No. 2) Act* (1988, Section 26) also stipulated that, schools should provide formal sex education, they should consult with parents on its content in an effort to complement the values instilled in the home environment. However, it in no way covered the public-health concerns that were mounting and leading to a wave of

panic, mainly through the spread of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). The Department for Education and Schools (DfES, 1987) did, however, imply that STIs were a potential problem and that sex education should state the importance of *'self restraint, dignity and respect for others'* and the *'moral risks of promiscuous sexual behaviour'*. The guidance went further by adding *'There is no place in any school or in any circumstance for teaching which advocates homosexual behavior, which presents it as the 'norm' or which encourages homosexual experimentation by pupils. It must be recognised that for many people, including members of religious faiths, homosexual practice is not morally acceptable and deep offence may be caused to them if the subject is not handled with sensitivity by teachers'* (1987, Section 22). This supported the moral right-wing who were determined to reinforce sex education that reflected the traditional model of sexual relations. However, gay-rights campaigners continued to fight for homosexuality to be addressed as part of the sex education curriculum. Before 1988 when the Local Government, Section 28 was passed schools were not permitted to promote homosexuals and their behaviour in any way. However, after the law was passed in 1988, under Section 28 school governors and teachers could not prevent homosexual discussions within schools, nor could they treat people differently based on their sexuality. This also applied to confidentiality after the civil-law case concerning Victoria Gillick in 1985, whereby heterosexual and homosexual young people were given the same rights to contraceptive and sexual health advice under the age of 16, without parental knowledge and/or consent. This ruling not only changed things dramatically for young people but also raised concerns for teachers who were unsure how to teach certain aspects of sex education, leading to doubt and avoidance

in their teaching practices (Thompson, 1994). However, legislation in the early 1990s was to change incorporating sex education that addressed growing societal concerns regarding increased teenage pregnancies and STIs.

In 1994, *The Education Act (No 62)* made sex education compulsory in secondary schools across England and Wales. It was furthermore to include all aspects of human sexual relationships (including homosexuality), HIV/AIDS as well as other STIs. To ensure secondary schools adhered to these rulings, OfSTED (school inspectors) were required to monitor schools and ensure they had sex education policies that reflected their teaching practices. The revised Education Act not only gave OfSTED the opportunity to monitor the delivery of sex education, but power had been taken away from schools with regard to their freedom as to whether or not to provide SRE to pupils. Although it is unclear as to how effective OfSTED are in monitoring all schools in England the ruling gave more power to parents in that they could remove their children from sex education programmes provided by schools, but not the sex education that was part of the National Curriculum. However, if parents did remove their children from non-national curricular activities they were required to provide this education themselves. Although this has found to be a rare occurrence (OfSTED, 2002) schools have a responsibility to teach effective sex education to pupils as part of a national curriculum, making particular topics associated with sex education hard to ignore.

Although sex education as a topic has been expanded upon greatly over the decades new guidance and advisory documents on the best ways to teach sex education continue to emerge. These reflect the same requirements stated in the Education Act (1994), with the addition of sex education now being strongly advised in primary

schools. However, these will be addressed in greater detail in subsequent sections of this thesis (see Sections 2.7, 2.8 and 2.9).

## **2.7 GENDER, SEXUALITY AND SEX EDUCATION**

The term ‘gender’ is often a straight forward concept, which is easy to grasp in that it relates to males (i.e. boys and men) and females (i.e. girls and women) as elements of biological constructs. However, sexuality is not as clearly defined as it entails several factors and behaviours. According to the World Health Organization (2004) ‘*sexuality is a central aspect of being human throughout life and encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction*’. Although all of these are associated with being human, they are expressed in thoughts, beliefs, fantasies, desires, attitudes, values and in how we behave in our particular roles and relationships. Numerous factors are thought to influence human sexuality (e.g. biological, psychological, social, cultural, ethical, legal and religious), thereby making it a difficult topic to define universally and completely understandable. Because sexuality encompasses several activities and sensations that are regarded as *sexual*, sexuality is historically determined and therefore part of a changing *discourse* (Foucault, 1976, 1998). For example, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the term sexuality was used to explain normality. Anything that was not regarded as the norm *sexually* was put outside the normality boundary and in the realm of psychopathy. As explained previously, these boundaries could be based for example on sexual desires and masturbation, which have not always been seen as the norm and therefore were restricted in society (see Diagnosis and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 1994, 2000). However, the theories of Sigmund Freud in the early 1900s gave way for sexology (the study of sex, including sex research) even though at the time it caused

much dismay and controversy. This not only gave society a greater appreciation of sexuality but, also allowed for research to develop in an effort to understanding sexuality from a gendered human perspective. For example, early studies of the 1990s examined the sexual behaviours in the first thirty days of human life (Blanton, 1917); the types of sexual questions pre-school children are most likely to ask (Hattendorf, 1932); the sexual development of young children (Issacs, 1933); the socio-sexual developments in young children (Campbell, 1939), and the sexual awareness and curiosity of young children (Conn, 1940a, 1940b, 1948). Other studies have included research into penile erections in young boys (Halverson, 1940), children's awareness of sex differences (Conn & Kanner, 1947) and children's discrimination of sex differences (Katcher, 1955). Sexual research has also involved parents which included them labelling sanctioned sexual behaviours (Sears, Maccoby & Levin, 1957) and examining their responses to questions of a sexual nature (Bandura & Walters, 1959). The work of Kinsey (1948) provided further research into understanding the sexual knowledge of children, pre-puberty play (heterosexual and homosexual) and activities associated with masturbation. Others (Money, Hampson & Hampson, 1955; Sears, 1965) concentrated on the male's biological make-up and its relation to aggression, along with the development of gender roles, often reinforcing females to be the weaker sex and being less aggressive sexually. Although the latter research caused, and still causes debates among feminists (Christopher & Mull, 2006; McFadden, 2003; Reddy, 2005; Runganga & Aggleton, 1998; Vance, 1991; Wyche, 1999), sexuality has more recently become concerned less with issues concerning childhood sexuality, but instead factors focusing upon sexuality as a means of curtailing STIs, teenage



pregnancies and preventing sexual intercourse among young people (Kirby, Stout & Kirby, 1993).

Sexual diversity has allowed for social ambiguities in attitudes to be challenged and reflected upon. This is especially so in relation to lesbian, gay and bisexual or transgender (LGBT) people. Historically, homosexual behaviours and relationships were frowned upon and perceived as wrong (Douglas, Kalman & Kalman, 1985; Eliason & Randall, 1991; Randall, 1989; Scherer, Wu & Haughey, 1991), mainly due to societal norms, individuals' upbringing and the negative links that homosexual behaviour had with the increase in STIs (e.g. HIV/AIDS). However, it has been shown that the increase in STIs is not just related to homosexual behaviours, but also heterosexual practices as well. This has taken the emphasis off LGBTs negative practices and instead research has focused upon them being a minority group, who are often victimised through their sexual orientation (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1993; Bockting, 1997; Cass, 1979; Coleman, 1982; Diamond, 1998; Jarman & Tennant, 2003; Stephany, 1992). As a result, the media have paid much attention to LGBT people, which has led to the socialisation and acceptance of their feelings and emotional needs, especially when engaging in relationships (Diamond, 2003; Health Promotion Agency, 2004; Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2005). This is especially so in that young people who are LGBT are more likely to suffer with mental-health problems, including substance abuse, depression and suicide (Cochran, Sullivan & Mays, 2003; Gilman et al. 2001; De Graaf, Sandfort & ten Have, 2006; Mayer, 2003; Mills et al. 2004; Sareen et al. 2005; Terrence Higgins Trust, 2005). Although young people who identify themselves as heterosexual are also likely to suffer from similar mental-health problems, a greater number of young people are labelling themselves as LGBT (Muris,

Merckelbach & Mayer, 2000; Rienzo, Button & Jiunn Jye Sheu, 2006); therefore, greater sexual health provisions are needed (Eliaison, 1996; Ellen & Perrin, 2002; Terrence Higgins Trust, 2005). These services are also important to help young people find acceptance within their family when being LGBT (Striepe & Tolman, 2003) and for those young people who are disabled but regard themselves as LGBT (Stokes & Kaur, 2005; Murphy & Young, 2005). Due to the negative outcomes associated with LGBT and the increased sexual behaviours in heterosexual young people a greater emphasis is now placed on the need to provide effective sex education that meets all the needs of young people, regardless of their sexuality. What constitutes effective SRE will be discussed in subsequently sections (see Section 2.9) in greater detail. However, it is important schools need to address homophobia, sexual orientation and sexual identity in a way that provides young people with the facts and information on all aspects of sexuality. It is essential that children and young people are given sexuality education in a safe environment for learning, which provides them with equal opportunities, and avoids from bullying and discriminatory practices (Sex Education Forum, 2005). It is also important that schools incorporate the principles of ethnicity and religion in their practices when teaching sex education, a topic discussed in the next section.

## **2.8 ETHNICITY, RELIGION AND SEX EDUCATION**

Race is thought to refer to unalterable traits that constitute an individual's genetic and biological make-up (Wyatt, 1991). These genetic and biological traits include facial features and skin colour (e.g. black or white), which have a hereditary link with a particular group to which people belong. An ethnic group on the other hand is "*a segment of a larger society whose members are thought, by themselves or others, to*

*have a common origin and to share important segments of a culture and who, in addition, participate in shared activities in which the common origin and culture are significant ingredients”* (Yinger, 1994, p.24). Ethnic groups/categories sometimes have their own religions, which in turn instils rules and expectations in individuals who are part of a particular faith. These rules represent the faith to which people belong, often governing and affecting the way they behave in situations and circumstances (e.g. sexual behaviour, alcohol consumption and food intake). The 2001 UK Census reported that 170 distinct religions existed in the UK, demonstrating the country to be a diverse, complex and multicultural society (Office for National Statistics, 2001). Although Blake and Katrak, (2002) reported that six main religions were followed in contemporary Western society today (i.e. Humanist, Christian (Protestant/Catholic), Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish and Islamic) 72% of those who were religious and who completed the 2001 Census reported being Christian, mainly Catholic. This supports the work of Monica Furlong (2000) who found that although people (especially young people) report belonging to the Catholic faith, they do not necessarily follow the practical and theoretical underpinnings of their religion, but may still experience social pressure to conform to institutional beliefs (e.g. school and family norms). Age and sex have been found to be associated with the decline in religion, with more females being religious than males and more younger people (16 to 34 year olds) not belonging to any particular religion (Office for National Statistics, 2004). Although declaration of affiliation religions has been noted to have been in decline since the 1950s with 74% in 1964 to 31% in 2005 belonging to a religion and attending church services (Park, Curtice, Thompson, Phillips et al. 2007), concerns have been raised regarding secularisation in the UK (Office for National Statistics, 2004;

Crabtree, 2007). Although this does not look likely in the short-term with many older people from different ethnic groups still practising their specific religious beliefs, it does have implications for young people for the future. This is especially so in relation to their sexual behaviour/attitudes and how they choose to behave and/or conform.

Among young people, religiosity, sexuality and sexual attitudes have been found to have a close connection, especially as religion influences many behavioural aspects associated with sex and sexually-related issues particularly around abstinence, contraception, abortion and homosexuality (Blake & Katrak, 2002). Most religions, especially Roman Catholicism, promote abstinence, forbid contraception (except for family-planning purposes in marriage) and abortion, and condemn homosexuality. Reference Group Theory provides one explanation why young people who adhere to the values of their religion will abide by what they are taught religiously, which in turn determines their sexual behaviour (Bock, Beeghley & Mixon, 1987; Mirande, 1968; Studer & Thornton, 1987; Zaleski & Schiaffino, 2000). Although abstinence-only education (AOE) and the use of chastity charms (e.g. chastity rings) have been found to have a positive influence over delaying the initiation of sexual intercourse among some young people (Rose, 2005; Santelli, Ott, Lyon, Rogers et al. 2006), AOE programs were not found to be effective regarding young people's intentions to have pre-marital sexual relationships (Denny & Young, 2006; Sather, 2002; Sather & Zinn, 2002; Silva, 2002). It would therefore seem AOE is an important behavioural strategy in that it can delay/prevent sex until marriage in some young people. However, it is ethically problematic in that it does not teach about the use of contraception (i.e. condoms and oral contraceptives), safe sex and healthy sexualities. Instead, it focuses upon the negative consequences of sexual activity outside marriage without giving

young people the sexual facts to make informed choices (Katz, 2006). AOE can furthermore, in the view of some people, violate human rights to health information and facts that are essential for developmental aspects of life (Santelli et al. 2006). This is especially so in relation to being insensitive to the needs of young people who are already sexually active (MaBray & LaBauve, 2002), and AOE discriminates against youth who are homosexual or part of the LGBT scene (Garnets, 2002; Position Paper, 2006). Therefore, the question arises: What sex education should be given to young people of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds?

It cannot be denied that religion and spirituality play an important part in some young people's lives (Cotton, Zebracki, Rosenthal, Tsevat & Drotar, 2006; Rew & Wong, 2006); however, sexual behaviour and its consequences (e.g. STIs and teenage pregnancies) have become a fundamental concern for politicians, educators and parents alike regarding young people who are sexually active and who do not abstain from sexual activities (Toups & Holmes, 2002). Therefore, suggestions have been made indicating that sex education and all sexual facts need to be given to reduce STIs and teenage pregnancies (Hopkins-Tanne, 2005; Katz, 2006, MaBray & LaBauve, 2002; World Report, 2005). It is not implied that sexual activity outside marriage should be encouraged, but comprehensive sex education needs to be given incorporating abstinence and contraception in an effort to reach all young people and their needs (Katz, 2006; World Report, 2005). Although young people may have a faith, they are also entitled to SRE that provides them with the information to make informed decisions on the transition from childhood, through to adolescence and into adult life. A greater explanation will now be given regarding the recommendations for

comprehensive sex education that meet the needs of young people in an effort to keep them safe and prevent/reduce STIs and teenage pregnancies.

## **2.9 SEX EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS**

In Britain, sex education or Sex and Relationship Education (SRE), as it is more commonly known, continues to receive much attention due to the continuing rise of STIs and high teenage pregnancy rates, which have a negative effect on young people's lives (Department of Health, 2002; Kippax & Stephenson, 2005; Social Inclusion Unit, 1999). Attempting to combat these problems has become a political and social priority. Many national agencies and local schemes have been set up to reduce high rates of especially teenage pregnancies in the UK, which has one of the four highest in the Western world (Bailey, 2005). Although the government plans to reduce these by half by the year 2010 (Short, 2004), the question remains: What more can be done to educate young people in an effort to prevent the consequences of sexual activity? Do we need more awareness of the consequences of sexual activity without the use of contraception? Many of the answers to these questions are under constant review by politicians and health-care and education authorities, but perhaps we need to consider the approaches taken by other countries with fewer sexual-health problems than ours. For example, European countries such as Germany, France and, especially, the Netherlands have far fewer teenage pregnancies than in the UK (van Loon, 2003). However, in countries such as the Netherlands SRE is approached differently in that greater emphasis is put on relationships and not necessarily *sex per se*. Furthermore schools rely on the contribution and involvement of parents more than the UK does, and specialist sexual-health practitioners are invited into schools to deliver sexual health programmes. The latter have been found to be less embarrassing for children as

sexual-health practitioners have the knowledge to give sexual facts, demonstrations and answer sexually related questions without being embarrassed themselves (Lewis & Knijn, 2001; van Loon, 2003). It appears that schools in the Netherlands and other European countries are addressing needs and meeting school-curriculum targets when educating children and young people about sexual matters better than in the UK. As with Britain, schools are given the freedom to decide what aspects of SRE are taught, and the methods that are used to teach effective SRE (e.g. Sex Education Roadshows and specialist outside agencies). However, there appears to be an inconsistency in the SRE schools provide. This leads to the following: What SRE is provided in British schools? How effective is this SRE? What more needs to be done? Which aspects of the education system make a difference? These are the questions that are generally raised when trying to understand how and what children and adolescents learn about when being given SRE at school. Although children learn about many aspects of SRE directly and indirectly from a variety of sources (e.g. parents, carers, friends, media and music) in Britain, school is the primary source where they will learn about sex and sexually related issues (McElderry & Omar, 2003; Sex Education Forum, 2003; Strange, Forrest, Oakley & Stephenson, 2006). However, what aspects should be covered as part of the National Curriculum when educating children and young people about the SRE facts that are going to keep them safe when developing into healthy young adults?

In 1999, the *Qualifications and Curriculum Authority* (QCA) and the *Department of Health* (DoH) developed a national framework for Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship. This framework was then published in 2000 and stated the requirements from schools. It included that PSHE is a non-statutory

requirement at Key Stages 1 and 2 (age 4 to 11 years), but a statutory requirement in Key Stages 3 and 4 (age 11 to 16 years) at secondary schools, where SRE must be provided. The purpose of PSHE is to “*explore the values and beliefs, which influence individuals and their relationships with others and the wider world; respond to their present lives and prepare for work and adult life, develop skills relating to practical activities, decision-making and problem-solving, communication, inter-personal skills, and learning through experience; provide relevant ways in which these skills might be developed and develop community links*” (DfEE, 2004, pp. 3-5). Although primary schools do not have to teach SRE in such a formal manner as secondary schools they do have to teach biological facts, which are consistent with the *National Curriculum Science Order* detailed in the *Education Act* (1996). This will cover aspects of SRE (e.g. body parts and differences between genders), but primary schools are furthermore encouraged and supported by local partnerships to provide PSHE via additional ‘key themes’ (i.e. emotional health and well-being, sex and relationships, drugs, citizenship, careers education and advice, diet and exercise, and safety) identified in the *National Healthy School Standard* (NHSS). The NHSS is part of the *Healthy Schools Programme* detailed in *The White Paper on Excellence in Schools* (1997), which promotes better health and emotional well-being, especially for children who are socially and economically disadvantaged. The scheme, which is lead by the DfEE and DoH, encourages primary schools to teach age-appropriate SRE that is consistent with the National Curriculum and their own SRE policy. Primary schools who reach these targets can become accredited to the national standard, which provides them with the credibility and status of the *Healthy Schools Award*. The commitment of primary schools to provide relevant SRE information not only equips children with the



knowledge and skills to form attitudes about their health, but furthermore prepares them for the statutory SRE that is to be given at secondary school.

In Key Stages 3 and 4 young people are taught PSHE and Citizenship with the aim of ‘Developing confidence and responsibility and making the most of their abilities, preparing to play an active role as citizens, developing a healthier, safer lifestyle, and developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people’ (QCA, 2000). These main strands apply especially to SRE and therefore the DfEE (2000) issued guidance to indicate the SRE that should be taught. The main topics which should be taught to young people include: sexual behaviour(s); sexual relationships; love, care and responsibilities of parenthood; pregnancy; types of contraception; safe sex; access to local services for advice and treatment; sexuality; STIs, abortion; emotional, biological; legal, social and cultural aspects of growing up; sex and peer pressure; and SRE-links to other risk-taking behaviours (i.e. smoking, drugs and alcohol). However, in essence good-quality SRE should not just provide young people with the facts about sex, sexual relationships and consequences associated with sex, but also include exploring young people’s attitudes, values and equipping them with the life-long skills (e.g. emotional, social, communication, negotiation, practical and decisions making skills) to make informed choices over their sexual behaviour and sexual relationships now, and in the future (Sex Education Forum, 2003). Although schools have a responsibility to their pupils to provide this comprehensive SRE, they furthermore have an obligation to parents and governing bodies to demonstrate they are teaching SRE effectively and within the guidelines stated. However, schools should ensure the SRE they teach reflects the values and morals of parents and the family and take these factors into consideration when

developing their individual school SRE policy. It is then the responsibility of OfSTED to ensure schools are monitored and meet the required targets and delivery of SRE that reflects the school's SRE policy.

Although research has shown support for the curriculum guidance stated in the NHSS as part of teaching good-quality SRE (Schagen, Bleckinsop, Schagen, Scott, Eggers et al. 2005), some British schools have adopted the popular approach of American schools by providing AOE when teaching SRE, especially faith schools. However, as discussed previously, AOE has not been found to change young people's attitudes and values towards sexual relationships outside marriage (Denny & Young, 2006; Sather, 2002; Sather & Zinn, 2002; Silva, 2002) or reduce sexual activity and teenage pregnancies (Hopkins-Tanne, 2007; Kirby 2001; Sather & Zinn, 2002; Swann, Bowe, McCormick & Kosmin, 2003; Weaver, Smith & Kippax, 2005). Instead it has been suggested that AOE can actually put young people at greater risk of teenage pregnancies and STIs since they are not being told about condoms and the use of other types of contraception (Bearman & Bruckner, 2001; Dailard, 2002; Jemmott, Jemmott & Fong, 1998; Sex Education Forum, 2004b). Schools have also been criticised for not including sexuality education that meets the needs of LGBT young people (Buston, 2004; Mason & Palmer, 1996). As indicated previously (Section 2.7), adult LGBT are a minority group who often experience many negative feelings associated with their sexuality, therefore putting them at greater risk of having a low self-esteem and higher risk of experiencing mental-health problems. This has been found to be the same for young people who are LGBT, some of whom are confused about their sexuality and therefore have suicidal thoughts and increased absenteeism from school as a result of the lack of support for their sexuality (Buston, 2004; Howard-Barr, Rienzo, Morgan &

James, 2005). Schools also need to give consideration to young people with learning disabilities as this is another minority group whose members are not always given SRE as it is perceived not to be appropriate to the education that they need (Doyle, 2006; Sex Education Forum, 2004c). It is imperative that regardless of young people's gender, culture, sexuality, faith and ability, children's and young people's rights to comprehensive SRE are met (National Children's Bureau, 2006; Sex Education Forum, 2004c). It is also important that schools ensure teachers are trained to teach all aspects of SRE to prevent embarrassment when teaching about sensitive subjects associated with SRE (Hobden, 2002; QCA, 2001; Stewart & Ray, 2001) and that what they teach is disseminated to parents so they are aware of the SRE taught to their children (Blake & Katrak, 2002; DfEE, 2000). OfSTED (2002) furthermore suggests that schools should also involve specialist outside agencies that have been set-up to support them when educating children and young people about sexual issues. Although it is schools choice whether to use these specialist outside agencies in the teaching of SRE, the impact of these specialist SRE sources and the effectiveness of the sexual-health education programmes they use needs to be assessed.

There is a wealth of research to suggest that school sexual-health education programmes have been a successful method in providing young people with the sexual knowledge they most need (Baraister, Dolan, Feldman & Cowley, 2002; Haglund, 2006; Hayter, 2005; Jones et al. 2003; Peckham & Carlson, 2003; Richardson-Todd, 2006; Ritchie, 2006). It has also been found that peer-led interventions (Haglund, 2005; Kidger, 2004; Twine, Robbe, Forrest & Davies, 2005) and school nurses can contribute towards these interventions and even more critically, that the school nurse can be an important leader in their development by becoming involved in the school's

SRE system (Irwin, 1997; Thistle & Ray, 2002). However, criticisms of these programmes and interventions have emerged. This is mainly because they focus on the educational and emotional needs of girls, especially relating to pregnancy and in the reduction of teenage pregnancies (Didion & Gatzke, 2005; Malinowski & Stamler, 2003; Somers & Fahlman, 2001). This has therefore been found to neglect the needs of boys in the delivery of SRE (Alldred & David, 2007; Hilton, 2001; Rogow & Haberland, 2005). Furthermore, the difference between the SRE given to boys and girls has been found to influence the different values and attitudes they hold (Halstead & Waite, 2002; Measor, 2004). For example, Halstead and Waite (2002) found that when discussing relationships, boys were more inclined to discuss the looks of their ideal woman, whereas girls were more interested in the honesty of the males when in a relationship. They also found that while both boys and girls knew about contraception, mainly condoms, boys were more likely to refer to them as something they joke about or blow up with their friends. Boys' and girls' attitudes towards parenthood also differed in that one boy joked about it being the 'girls' business', while other boys stated that a baby would be the responsibility of both the boy and the girl. However, girls were far more aware of the impact a child would have over their lives, but talked positively about the support that their own parents would provide if one was to fall pregnant. Girls were also found to talk more to their mothers and older siblings than boys. It was reported that although boys were expecting their parents to initiate the conversation about sex, they did not. As a consequence they reported using mainly friends, television and viewing pornographic material in magazines and videos to learn about the opposite sex and sex-related issues. This research demonstrated that girls have a stronger bond with family members than boys, and that boys resorted to

learning about sex via adult-orientated sexual material, making their values and attitudes towards sex very different. Some of these findings were supported in a later study, which also found puberty and sexuality were discussed later for boys than girls (Omar, McElderry & Zakharia, 2003). These studies showed that schools provide SRE that differs between genders and therefore does not support the SRE guidance (2000), thus creating inequalities between boys and girls.

However, what SRE would children and young people like to receive? Is the SRE they receive adequate for their needs? The simple answer to this appears to be 'no' (National Children's Bureau, 2007). According to a survey of 20,000 young people, nearly half (40%) reported that the SRE they receive is poor or very poor. This especially applies to different types of relationship, which young people thought should be covered between the ages of 5-10 rather than 12 to 14 when they already more than likely to have had or be contemplating a close and personal relationship. Young people also wanted to be taught about all aspects of SRE by the ages of 11-13, especially the different types of contraception. However, some schools were found to not teach these topics at an in-depth level and therefore young people were left having to find out information for themselves. Other criticisms of the SRE given to children and young people were that the SRE was found to be inconsistent, too biological, given too late and was not taught on a continuous basis between the ages of 12 and 15. Furthermore, teachers need to be trained to teach SRE properly and better practice is needed as the SRE sessions were generally perceived to be rushed and not given the same importance as other subjects taught at school. Although education authorities and school governors may not welcome this news, as it challenges the value of SRE that is currently given, the views of young people need to be taken into consideration if SRE

is to be improved and better SRE programmes are to be provided. However, parents are also thought to teach their children about sexual issues, which can act as a support to the SRE provided at school.

## **2.10 SEX EDUCATION AT HOME AND SOCIAL LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER**

Parents have been criticised for not discussing sexual matters with their children. This has mainly been due to feeling embarrassed and experiencing discomfort when doing so (Burgess, Dziegielewski, Evan-Greens, 2005; Dilorio, Hockenberry-Eaton, Maibach, Rivero et al. 1996; Feldman & Rosenthal, 2000; Kahlbaugh, Lefkowitz, Au & Sigman, 1997; King & Lorusso, 1997; Lefkowitz, Kahlbaugh, Au & Sigman, 1998; Rosenthal & Feldman, 1999; Jordan, Price & Fitzgerald, 2000; Kakavoulis, 2001; Walker, 2001). Although this could be associated with how their parents discussed sexual matters with them when they were younger, parents in the 21<sup>st</sup> century have a main role to play in educating their children. This has been recognised by the government and education authorities, which is why schools are now encouraged to work with parents when providing formal SRE to children (DfES, 2001; Rich, 2004; Sex Education Forum, 2003b; DfES, 2001; Rich, 2004; Walker, 2004). Due to the important role parents have to play in educating their children, it has even been suggested that parents could be the main sex educators of their children in the technological era (Goldman & Bradley, 2004; Krafchick & Biringen, 2002). This is mainly because it is the responsibility of parents to help their children develop, grow and remain healthy (QCA, 2000; Novilla, Barnes, De La Cruz, Williams, & Rogers, 2006; Pike, 2006), whilst also aiding in the attitudes their children form, and their beliefs and values concerning identity, relationships and intimacy (Novilla et al. 2006). However, for some parents this feels like a daunting task and therefore community

programs have been set up to help parents, especially in building on their knowledge and confidence to teach their children about sexual matters (Anderson, Griffin, Keenan, Uman & Duggaal, 1999; Clayton, 2006; DuRant, Wolfson, LaFrance, Balkrishman & Altman, 2006; Klein, Sabaratnam, Pazos, Auerbach & Graff Havens, 2005; Leaderman & Tahir, 2003). Many of these programs have focused on the different qualities of parents and on the importance of communication.

‘Good-quality’ parents are thought to facilitate their children’s learning at all stages of their lives, providing them with the knowledge and skills to meet their full potential on the transition to adulthood (Berger, 1987; Bradley & Matsukis, 2000; Fine & Lee, 2001). With this comes the importance of effective communication between parents and their children (Wills, Gibbons, Gerrard, Murry & Brody, 2003). However, communication is hard to define as it includes diversities between people, settings and societies when exchanging information either verbally (e.g. through pitch, annotation and fluency) or non-verbally (e.g. through facial expressions, eye contact, mannerisms and posture). Over the decades communication theorists (Parse, 1981; Pepula, 1952; Wright & Leahey, 1990) have considered various factors that can be seen as the most important aspects of communication. However, Forchuk and Brown, (1989) claim that interpersonal relationships, interactions and pattern integrations are the most important features concerning family communications. This is mainly because communication patterns promote meaningful learning (Turnure, 1986) and reach the needs of young people (White, 1986).

## **2.11 FRIENDSHIPS AND LEARNING ABOUT SEXUAL ISSUES**

The importance of parents and issues surrounding sex has already been highlighted. However, parents also have a vital role to play in the friendships children and

adolescents develop. According to Bowlby (1973, 1979) early interactions with parents provide mental representations, or schemas for future relationships. Bowlby suggests that attachments with parents influence children's cognitions, which not only shape their behaviour, but also their friendships and romantic relationships in the future. Over childhood and adolescent years friendships are developed based on autonomy, intimacy, shared experiences, trust, mutual understanding and concern for each other (Hartup, 1996). It is thought that children learn from these friendships and that they are maintained through mimicking each others behaviour and the positive characteristics that can help form new relationships (Crosnoe & Needham, 2001). However, as we grow older changes in friendships occur and become stronger among a close knit of friendship groups (Dunn, 1993). It has been found that close friendships in adolescence are associated with mutual commitment of affection, trust and support (Dunn, Slomkoski, Donelan & Hervera, 1995). Although friends provide these qualities adolescence is a time for developing one's own identity, seeking intimacy and forming dyadic romantic relationships (Russell & Consolacion, 2003). According to Koch (1993) intimacy and dating in a romantic relationship is a core attribute that gives young people the experience and relationship skills that will act as markers for the rest of their lives. However, adolescent romantic relationships are generally the start of different sexual activities and the exploring of each genders bodies (Miller & Moore, 1990). According to Harper et al. (2004) these romantic relationships occur in a social context, whereby friends often have a large influence. Although friends have been found to influence their peers timing of first sexual intercourse (Sieving, Eisenberg, Pettingell & Skay, 2006) and condom usage (Paranjape et al. 2004; Whitaker & Miller, 2000) friends have also been found to have a much bigger influence over dating and



romantic relationships (Collins, Ford, Guichard & Allard, 2005; Crosnoe & Needham, 2004; Furman, Simon, Shaffer & Bouchey, 2004; Harper et al. 2004; Russell & Consolacion, 2003). This is mainly because of the significant time friends spend together whereby they learn from each other about the opposite sex (Furman, Brown & Feiring, 1999; Leaper & Anderson, 1997). Although friends may not have any additional sexual knowledge than their peers, friends serve a number of functions based on their own experiences when contributing towards their friends attitudes and romantic dating practices. This may be in the setting up of dates (Connolly, Furman & Konarski, 2000; Davies & Windle, 2000; Paul & White, 1990) and giving advice on the ways to behave when in an intimate relationship/situation (Harper et al. 2004; Wood, Senn, Desmarais, Park & Verberg, 2002). It therefore appears friends have a significant role to play in their friend's knowledge of dating and sexual experience. However, the media have also been found to have a massive impact over what young people learn, especially in relation to sex and knowledge of sexual issues.

## **2.12 MEDIA AND SOCIAL REINFORCEMENTS ON SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDES**

For decades, the media have been identified as having a substantial effect on people's lives (Agha, 2003; Batchelor, Kitzinger & Burtney, 2004; Forrest, 1997; Himmelweit, Oppenheim & Vince, 1958; Huston-Stein & Friedrich, 1975; McQuail, 1983; Millwood-Hargrave, 1999; Schramm, Lyle & Parker, 1961; Withey & Abeles, 1980; Wolf & Keilwasser, 1991). This is especially so regarding what children and young people learn about through sex roles, sexual stereotypes and sexual issues (Martino, Collins, Kanouse, Elliott & Berry, 2005; Somers & Tynan, 2006). However, the big question is what effect does television viewing have on young people's attitudes and sexual behaviour in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Apparently, the effect is profound in that after

parents, friends and school, children and young people perceive the media to be one of the main sources of information when learning about sexual matters (Brown, 2002; Strasburger, 2005; Turnbull, van Schaik & van Wersch, 2010; Ward & Friedman, 2006). It has been found that adolescents have televisions in their own bedrooms, which allows them to watch preferred programmes (including videos/ DVDs) at their own will, at most times of the day (Gruber, Wang, Christensen, Grube & Fisher, 2005).

As a result, it has been revealed that between the ages of 8 and 18, adolescents alone watch between 2-4 hours of television in a given day (Ashby, Arcari & Edmonson, 2006; Bar-on, 2000; Roberts, Foehr & Rideout, 2005) exceeding the amount of time children spend interacting with their parents (Hofferth & Sandberg, 2001). Viewing times on television have often been shown to be unsupervised (Gruber et al. 2005). Therefore it is concerning that 85% of the content broadcasted on television alone is of a sexual nature (Kunkel, Eyal, Biely, Cope-Farrar & Donnerstein, 2003), depicting sex to occur outside a committed relationship and giving little emphasis to contraception, and the consequences associated with STIs and preventing pregnancy (Brown, 2002; Kunkel et al. 2003). LGBT and abortion also rarely feature in mainstream television viewing (Brown, 2002; Walsh, Gotthoffer & Lepre, 2002). Furthermore, sexual messages seen via the medium of television have also been found to be unrealistic and stereotypical (Ward, 2003). Women are often viewed as sexual objects, whereas men are seen to be sex-driven and looking to enhance their dominance over women (Arnett, 2002). This has been found to be especially so on music channels and daytime talkshows, which are a popular favourite among young people (Arnett, 2002; Kunkel et al. 2003; Strasburger, 2005). However, other

television programmes, such as soap operas, also illustrate gendered roles and sexuality by showing passionate kissing, intimate touching, flirting and detailed conversations surrounding sex and sex-related issues (Kunkel et al. 2003). Although television may reflect the norms in society, programmes have also been shown to function as modelling in the sense that they help form identities of young people who watch people they admire and aspire to be like (Brown, 2006). It has been suggested that when young people watch television programmes they form their own identity by viewing and mimicking styles and behaviours of their idols which they perceive to be desirable (Arnett, 2002; Batchelor, 2003; Karniol, 2001).

This has also been reported for young people who use popular teenage and adult-focused magazines, such as *Cosmopolitan* and *Vogue*. It has been found that as well as television, these and other similar magazines (i.e. *Heat*, *Seventeen* and *Nuts*) have an important part to play in shaping attitudes of and developing knowledge in young people (Kaplan & Cole, 2003; Kim & Ward, 2004). This is especially so in providing the ideal sexual images that young women should adhere to in relation to a perfectly shaped body, enhancing beauty and highlighting the features that are attractive to men (Baker, 2005; Boynton, 2003; Chow, 2004; Gysels, Kaplan & Cole, 2003; Kim & Ward, 2004; Pool & Nyanzi, 2005; Welles, 2005). For example, it might be perceived that Katie Price, who is also known as 'Jordan' for being a glamour model is often shown in magazines to look sexy and flirtatious, often being surrounded by sexy, popular men (e.g. Peter Andre) who some young women fantasise over, and most young men strive to be similar to. Although Katie Price is regarded as a good-quality mother to her three children, she is mainly known around the globe for her partying antics while boasting her overstated, but immaculate hair and make-up, a

glowing but, healthy-looking fake tan, surgically enhanced breasts, cosmetically enhanced white teeth and having Botox injections to her face in an attempt to remain youthful and attractive for the benefits of the opposite sex. Although these traits and characteristics may appear desirable to young males because it may satisfy their sexual thoughts and desires, young women are now reported in the media to be imitating Katie Price/Jordan because she is seen as a successful and powerful celebrity, encompassing the qualities that young men find desirable.

Although this could be seen to reinforce the idea that women are objects, existing to appease the sexual desires of men (Baker, 2005; Jochen & Valkenburg, 2007; Johnson, McCreary & Mills, 2007), few male magazines exist to educate male adolescents about sex and sexual issues properly. Therefore, young males use pornography to learn about women, sex and sexual-related issues (Ezzell, 2009; McDowell, 2008; Taylor, 2006; Traeen Nilson & Hein, 2006), just as men have done for centuries (Ezzell, 2009). Although, it is difficult to assess exactly what young people learn from reading magazines with sexual content the biggest media contributor to sexual discussions and what children learn about sexual matters has been found to come from accessing the World Wide Web (Foster-Cox, Scharer & Clark, 2009).

In 2007, nearly sixteen million homes in the UK had computers, which equates to potentially 65% of all households having access to the Internet (Office for National Statistics, 2007). Although the Internet is a useful source for accessing different types of educational information, the words 'sex' and 'porn' have been the most searched for words since 1999 (Richardson, 2009). The UK Council for Child Internet Safety revealed that on average two thirds of 13 to 17 year olds in the UK have viewed pornographic material and one third used pornographic material to learn about sex and

women's bodies (Johnson, 2008). It would appear that pornography is not difficult to access as there are 420 million pornographic pages on the Internet (Richardson, 2009). As a consequence pornography generates 420 million a year through displaying explicit material (Richardson, 2009).

However, concerns have been raised, as it is hard to regulate content on the World Wide Web leading to extreme viewing of pornography for all (Haggstrom-Nordin, Sandberg & Hanson, 2006). The Internet is therefore perceived as a sexual medium (Jochen & Valkenburg, 2005) engulfed with sexually explicit material often, showing sexual activity in a blatant and unconcealed way. Because the World Wide Web is swamped with pornography, increased concerns are being raised with the capacity of this medium especially as it provides cybersex (i.e. exchanging of sexual fantasies and/or erotic messages) and online chat rooms. The latter have been found to be a main source for meeting new people in the privacy of one's own home by interacting via computers. Although they allow for private conversations to occur with strangers, it has been found that young people are now using chat rooms to construct their own identities and to engage in sexual communication (Subrahmanyam, Greenfield & Tynes, 2004; Subrahmanyam, Smahel & Greenfield, 2006; Suzuki & Calzo, 2004).

Greater concerns are being raised as young people use chat rooms to find dating partners (Anderson, 2005; Kienfie, Khoo & Ang, 2005), placing them at great risk of sex crimes and exploitation (Bull & McFarlane, 2000; Jochan, Valenburg & Schouten, 2006; Toomey & Rothenberg, 2000; Wolak, Finkelhor & Mitchell, 2004;). Although the research presented highlights the worries associated with young people using computers, this popular medium has also been found to act as a useful source for

educating young people when providing them with the sexual information that they need. For example, computers have been shown to provide effective sexual-health messages via different intervention programs (Carlin et al. 2006; Fong, Zanna & Elton-Marshall, 2006; Gilbert, Temby & Rogers, 2005; Goold et al. 2005; Keller & La Belle, 2005; Yom & Lee, 2005) and by challenging young people's knowledge via computer games (Alemi, Cherry & Meffert, 1989; Bay-Cheng, 2001; Paperny & Starn, 1989; Starn & Paperny, 1990). Although the effects of computer games and interactive sexual-health programs need further assessment to demonstrate how useful they can be, further considerations need to be given to the dangers associated with the World Wide Web with the aim of protecting children and young people. In addition, other media sources need to be encouraged to provide more sexual-health information that is relevant and beneficial to young people and their needs. This way, children and young people may be discouraged from accessing inappropriate media sources to learn about sex and sex-related issues (Brown, Harpern & L'Engle, 2005).

## **2.13 SUMMARY**

Chapter 2 of this thesis has discussed the history of sex and sexuality. This chapter has included a description of the historical context of sexual behaviour and the reasons associated with why people choose to have sexual contact. Legal aspects of sex and sexuality in the UK have also been addressed to provide an understanding of how sex education should be taught, whilst also giving consideration to differences based on gender, sexuality, ethnicity and religion. Although the historical aspects of sex and sexuality provide a basis for understanding people's sexual behaviours, an introduction was also given as to how young people learn about sexual matters from school, home, their friends/peers and the media. Chapter 3 of this thesis will complement these

factors, highlighting there effects over young people's sexual behaviour and locating this thesis into a theoretical position.

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## **CHAPTER 3**

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### **CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN SEX AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION**



## **CONTENTS**

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### **3.1 OVERVIEW**

Chapter 2 has addressed the historical, cultural and social aspects of sex and how sexual values, attitudes and behaviours have altered and diversified over the last century in the UK. However, Chapter 3 aims to categorise these issues and concerns and place them in the context of the present investigation. The aim is to address aspects of sex education from young people's perspectives and the effects these have on sexual communication within families.

### **3.2 YOUNG PEOPLE AND PEER PRESSURE**

The teenage years in many young people's lives have often been found to be turbulent and associated with feeling worried, frightened, moody, stressed and alone (Birch & Kancherla, 2006; Brown, Tuefel, Coleman, 1999; Costello, Egger & Angold, 2005; Insel & Fenton, 2005; Muris, Merckelbach & Mayer, 2000; Muris, Merckelbach & Gadet, 2000). Worries are also heightened at this time as young people feel a need to be equal to their peers and become more in control of their own lives, conforming to particular trends to be popular and liked (Brown et al. 2006). However, to complicate things further these worries become amplified as young people start to explore their own sexuality and become sexual beings (Christopher, 2001; Tolman, 2002). With this comes the experimentation of particular behaviours such as drinking alcohol, smoking and sexual activity, all of which have been found to be influenced by peers (Sutton, 2007). The most important one that relates to the present investigation is sexual behaviour. However, drinking and smoking have also been associated with adolescents being likely to partake in early sexual intercourse (Bellis, 2009; Bersamin, Walker, Fisher, & Grube, 2006; Howard & Wang, 2005; Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2005, Paul, Fitzjohn, Herbison & Dickson, 2000).

Although it has been found that peers can have a protective effect in delaying adolescents' initiation into sexual intercourse (Sieving, Eisenberg, Pettingell & Skay, 2006), there is a wealth of research to suggest pressure from peers can also accelerate the timing of first sexual intercourse especially if they perceive their peers' to be sexually active (Alba, Driscoll & Moore, 1998; Crockett, Bingham, Chopak & Vicary, 1996; Dickson, 1998; Miller, 2002; Miller, Benson & Galbraith, 2001; Wight, Henderson, Raab, Abraham & Hart, 2000). In addition, the pressures associated with adolescents' early sexual intercourse have been found to occur in short-term or casual relationships. Consequently, young people have reported feeling guilt and regret due to the break-up of short-term sexual relationships (Dickson, 1998; Wight et al. 2000) where contraception is rarely used, thereby increasing the likelihood of STIs and unwanted pregnancy (Cooksey, Rindfuss & Guilkey, 1996; Ostergaard, 1997; Hacker, Amare, Stunk & Horst, 2000; Wight et al. 2000). However, other behaviours such as drinking alcohol have been found to affect adolescents and their peer's regularity of sexual intercourse.

As with adolescents' sexual behaviour, alcohol consumption is on the increase among young people (Office for National Statistics, 2005). Increased alcohol consumption and the prevalence and risk of binge drinking has led to what the government now calls the 'new British disease' as it increases the risk of an array of health-related and social problems (Hetherington & Bowers, 2005). Among these health and social problems is the increase of sexual relationships and the number of sexual partners (Wells, Horwood & Ferusson, 2004). This could therefore have serious consequences for young people as they are continually putting themselves at risk.

However, further consideration needs to be given to the sexual behaviour of young people and what their reasons are for engaging in sexual relationships.

### **3.3 THE SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR OF YOUNG PEOPLE**

As already alluded to, young people engage in activities that can compromise their health and well-being through the risks they take. Sexual experimentation is one of these activities, which is why it is given constant attention in the media, in education, with health-care providers and amongst policy makers at government levels. The Department of Health (2004) *White Paper: Choosing Health* addresses the high levels and consequences of young people's sexual behaviour. However, awareness of these messages in the media does not seem to deter young people from continuing to engage in sexual activities at their own will. It would therefore seem that in order to address this problem we need to try and understand why young people want to have sexual relationships, rather than just documenting what is widely known, which is that young people are becoming more sexually active at a younger age (Office for National Statistics, 2009).

From birth, children are protected by parents with whom they ideally develop deep, meaningful and understanding relationships. However, in early teenage years adolescents are breaking away from parents as a means of forming their own identity and develop the characteristics that are important to them as individuals. One of these is the desire to form a close and romantic relationship with a partner to feel secure and have boyfriends/girlfriends similar to their peers. To say partner, does not exclude same-sex or both-sex relationships, as it has been found young people from the age of 14 are increasingly identifying themselves as LGBT (Health Promotion Agency, 2004). Although during the different stages of adolescence relationships may change,

young people are essentially seeking a partner who they recognise to be attractive and who they can become good companions with (Auslander, Rosenthal & Blythe, 2005). At this time, young people are looking for acceptance from peers concerning their romantic relationships (Connolly, Furman & Konarski, 2000; Connolly & Goldberg, 1999), learning how to share information and how to compromise within different relationships (Auslander et al. 2005). It has been found that in early adolescence these romantic relationships are likely to be brief in duration leading to rejection, conflict and sometimes depression, especially if sex has occurred (Brown, Yung, Cosgrave, Killackey, Standord et al. 2006; La Greca & Harrison, 2005; Roese, Pennington, Coleman, Janicki, 2006; Tashiro & Frazier, 2003). However, as adolescents become older their romantic relationships start to become steadier, involving more emotions, trust, friendship and experimentation with sexual behaviours (Shulman & Kipmis, 2001; Watson & Bell, 2005; Zimmer-Gembeck, Siebenbruner & Collins, 2001). Although this may start with flirting, petting, deep kissing, touching of breasts and other body parts (including genitals) young people may decide to proceed to full sexual intercourse with partners they find attractive.

Even though full sexual intercourse does not only take place in committed relationships, but also in casual relationships, young people have been found to engage in oral sex as it improves intimacy and does not have the risks associated with vaginal sex (Conrad & Blythe, 2003; Cornell & Halpern-Felsher, 2006; Prinstein, Meade & Cohen, 2003; Sanders & Reinisch, 1999; Schwartz, 1999). Research by Kahn, Huang, Austin, Aweh and Colditz (2004) support these findings, indicating that young people are concerned with the consequences of risky sexual activity. However, their research mainly focused on white females aged between 11 and 19 and their intentions to have

safe-sex to avoid pregnancy. This therefore excludes the beliefs and intentions of males to have safe-sex and gives less attention to the risk of contracting STIs. Although the research by Kahn et al. (2004) demonstrates that young people are concerned about the consequences of risky sexual behaviour it could explain why over the last two decades fewer young people are having sex, contracting STIs and having babies. This appears to contradict the news in the media to indicate the consequences associated with young people are having sex more often.

Teenage pregnancy rates have not increased since the 1970s, but the Labour government has made attempts to reduce UK rates of teenage pregnancy and STIs so they are similar to other countries such as Germany, France and the Netherlands (Hoggart, 2006; Standards and Effectiveness Unit, 1999). There are concerns in the UK that young people are engaging in less-safe sex and more risky sexual practices without the use of contraception (Hoggart, 2006). This leads to the increase of STIs and pregnancy, which will now be addressed in more detail.

### **3.4 CONTRACEPTIVE USAGE AND CONSEQUENCES OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR**

The consequences of young people's sexual behaviour when not using contraception have become a global issue mainly because they are associated with teenage pregnancy, STIs and negativity towards the health and well-being of adolescents and young people in general. Repeated emphasis of the negative factors associated with young people's sexual behaviour is often documented from a political, educational and health-care perspective. For example, it is widely known that the UK has the highest teenage pregnancy rate in Europe (English, Mussell, Sheather & Sommerville, 2005; Health Protection Agency, 2006; Reiss, 2006; Robinson & Ronstad, 2002) and that the STI and HIV statistics show a continuing rise (National Statistics, 2004; Rosengard,

Adler, Millstein, Gurvey & Ellen, 2004; Shapiro & Makoroff, 2006; van der Laar, Haks & Coenen, 2002). As a means of reducing these statistics concerning the negative effects of young people's sexual health, intervention programmes and healthcare provisions have been put in place to tackle the ever-growing problem (Chao-Hua, Bo, Yan & Er-sheug, 2004; Ma & Clark, 2005; Nonoyama, Tsurugi, Shiraia, Ishikawa & Honguchi, 2005; Raabe, 2005; Robinson, Bockting, Rosser, Miner & Coleman, 2002; World Health Organisation, 2004). Although some of these were criticised because they did not meet the needs and requirements of young people (Baraitser, Pearce, Blake, Collander-Brown & Ridley, 2004; Cowan, 2002; Creighton, Edwards, Welch & Miller, 2002; DiCenso, Guyatt & Willan, 2002b; Lavery, Pugh & Joseph, 2006) other programmes regarding condom usage to protect against both STIs and pregnancy have been found to be effective in educating and encouraging young people to use contraception (Ma & Clark, 2005; Parkes, Henderson & Wight, 2005; Sixsmith et al. 2006; Waters & Barton, 2006). However, these studies have mainly been conducted in larger inner-city locations where risky behaviours are greater and therefore may not be representative and demonstrate the effectiveness of condom usage programmes of other young people who reside in smaller communities. Furthermore, young people have different reasons for not using condoms, which is the only form of contraception that can protect against both pregnancy and STIs when used properly.

Although it has been found that condoms are more likely to be used by young people who have communicated sexual intercourse prior to the occasion, their usage was not related to motives for having sex, such as expressing love and pleasure (Gebhardt, Kuyper & Dusseldorp, 2006). Other research has also found that using

condoms can reduce the pleasure of sex, making it less fun (Widdice, Cornell, Liang & Halpern-Fisher, 2006) and therefore sexual partners resist against the use of condoms as part of safe-sex practices (Hogben, Liddon, Pierce, Sawyer, Papp et al. 2006). The quality of relationship has also been identified as a strong predictor for not using condoms during sexual intercourse, as it indicates lack of trust (Fortenberry, Tu & Harezlak, 2003; Marston & King, 2006; Morrison, Rogers-Gilmore & Hoppe, 2003; Widdice et al. 2006; Woodrome, Zimet, Donald, Orr & Fortenberry, 2006). Despite the research findings that indicates that young people are not using condoms when having sexual intercourse, other research findings to the contrary also exists to suggest that condoms are now being used on a regular basis among young people (Anderson, Santelli & Marrow, 2006; Cassell, Mercer, Imrie, Copas & Johnson, 2006; Rosengard et al. 2001; van Empeien & Kok, 2006). This is especially so when young people had prior discussions with their mother as it provided them with greater knowledge of STIs and more knowledge of how to use condoms correctly (Miller & Whitaker, 2001). However, the influence of peers and their lack of willingness to use condoms also negatively affected young people's intentions to practice safe-sex (Dilorio et al. 2001). Research by Dilorio et al. (2001) also found that if young people were confident and knowledgeable about how to put on a condom properly condoms were used more consistently regardless of peer influences. However, the results of their study need to be treated with caution when generalising about the condom usage of young people as their sample was conducted with African-American youths aged between 13 and 16 years of age. However, a large sample (N=405) was used which increases reliability of the results among the population that were studied. Although research emphasises the influence peers can have over young people, sexual-health services and sexual-health



practitioners have attempted to make access to contraception a relatively straight forward process.

As long as young people are perceived to be Gillick Competent, not being sexually abused or exploited, sexual-health practitioners can and will provide contraception. The various types of hormonal contraception that are available for females are oral contraceptive pills, subcutaneous implants, intramuscular injections, vaginal rings and condoms (oral and vaginal). The only form of contraception that is available for males is the condom. However, young people have been found not to use contraception properly, especially condoms, which are prone to slipping or bursting (Crosby, DiClemente, Wingood, Sionean, Cobb et al. 2001; Naz & Rowan, 2009; Zimmer-Gembeck, Doyle & Daniels, 2001). This causes concern because condoms are the biggest protector against STIs (including HIV/AIDS), especially in men who are gay, bisexual or transgender (Caceres, Aggleton & Galea, 2008). With more young people falling into this category more needs to be done to support the sexual health of boys and young men who are gay, bisexual or transgender (van den Akker, 2000; Vincent, 2006) as well as those who identify themselves as straight in sexual orientation (Davison, 2003). The most-common STIs are gonorrhoea and chlamydia (Avert, 2006). The latter has given the most cause for attention as it is the STI, which is the most common and can cause Pelvic Inflammatory Disease leading to infertility (Avert, 2006). However, many young people are unaware they have chlamydia as the symptoms are not visible because it is a bacterial infection. Although young people have been found to delay sexual intercourse to prevent these infections, STIs and teenage pregnancies do not seem to be falling. However, could this be partially due to the attitudes young people have towards pregnancy?

In a study by Gallup-Black and Weitzman (2005), 87% of teenagers reported having sexual intercourse below the age of 18. Of these 51% had friends who were teen parents and 53% perceived teenage parenthood to be acceptable. Although these statistics were affected by race and educational attainment, it appears that some young people do not fear the consequences associated with teenage pregnancy when coming from a lower socioeconomic background. This was in contrast to young women from higher socioeconomic backgrounds who were driven by their career, university and status. Although it was found that these young women would consider abortion if they were found to be pregnant (Jewell et al. 2000), young women were also identified as using emergency contraception as a form of birth control now, and intended to use it in this way in the future (French, Ward, McCrea & Nash, 2004; Graham, Moore, Sharp & Diamond, 2002). Unfortunately, this does not deal with the problem of STIs and HIV/AIDS. Therefore, it is important to address the impact that families can have when reducing the negative consequences associated with young people's sexual activity.

### **3.5 THE INFLUENCE OF FAMILIES OVER YOUNG PEOPLE'S SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR**

Family structure provides children with the developmental context to grow up and learn from parents and/or older and younger siblings. However, variations exist within families, making each one of these unique (Miller, 2002). This is especially so regarding the different types of relationship between parents and their children. The positive influence of parents on discussing sexual matters with their children has already been highlighted, demonstrating the beneficial role they can have over their children's sexual behaviour (Aalsma, Fortenberry, Sayegh & Orr, 2006; Ackard, Neumark-Sztainer, Story, & Perry, 2006; Bonell et al. 2006; Carolyne, Swain,

Ackerman & Ackerman, 2006; Dallas, 2004; DiClemente, Wingood, Crosby, Cobb et al. 2001; Fasula & Miller, 2006; Lloyd, 2004; Miller, 2002; Noller, 2005; Troth & Peterson, 2000). There is also evidence to suggest that amongst young people who have good-quality relationships with their parents (characteristics by parental warmth, support and parent-child closeness/connectedness) teenage pregnancy is reduced through young people remaining sexually abstinent, having fewer sexual partners and using contraception more consistently when they do actually engage in sexual relationships (Crockett, Bingham, Chopak & Vickary, 1996; Jaccard, & Dittus, 2000; McIntosh, Moore & Omur, 2009; Miller, Norton, Fan & Christopherson, 1998; Miller, Benson & Galbraith, 2001). In contrast, in families where there are single or divorced parents, adolescents are at greater risk of early sexual activity and pregnancy (Whitbeck, Simons & Kao, 1994). This has mainly been attributed to parents having more permissive attitudes towards sex, based on their own dating activity and to the fact that less parental supervision is provided (Meier, 2003; Whitbeck, 1997).

Parental supervision and monitoring of children has been perceived as an important factor influencing parent-child relationships, as they include rules within the family structure and a family's household routines, such as mealtimes, where more communication can occur through shared activity (Danziger, 1995; DeVore & Ginsberg, 2005; Sonenstein & Pleck, 1993). Lack of parental supervision has also been linked to other high-risk behaviours associated with peers, such as alcohol and drug use, which can increase the likelihood of unprotected sexual intercourse (Bellis, 2009; Bersamin, Walker, Fisher, & Grube, 2006; Howard & Wang, 2005; Joseph Rowntree Foundation; Paul, Fitzjohn, Herbison & Dickson, 2000). It has therefore been suggested that parental supervision is an important aspect that reduces high-risk

behaviours as it provides a protective influence over young people's sexual behaviour (Miller, 2002). However, the social class of families has also been linked to parental monitoring and early sexual activity among adolescents. Valle, Torgerson, Roysamb, Klepp and Thelle (2005) found that lower social class was linked with adolescent sexual activity, a lack of parental monitoring, and reduced young people's future aspirations and poor academic achievement. However, findings from their study need to be treated with caution as they specifically apply to young people in Norway using data that was collected in 1996 via an Oslo Youth Study, which may possibly not be representative of the time the research was published, some nine years later. Furthermore, data collected from the 39-page self-administered questionnaire only applied to the sexual activity of 16-year old heterosexuals which excluded the sexual behaviour of LGBT youths. Although no explanation was given for the exclusion Valle et al.'s (2005) findings relate mainly to the sexual activity of young people with little consideration given to parental monitoring and socioeconomic status a study by Miller et al. (2001) found that low socioeconomic status is associated with poverty, high rates of teenage pregnancy and reduced likelihood of contraceptive use. All of which have been found to be associated with poor education, occupation and low income of parents (Miller, 2002). However, as well as parents being found to influence their children's sexual behaviour siblings have also been found to have a positive effect within the family. Although the literature provided emphasises the importance of family, in particular parents, on influencing and educating their children, a psychological account, including theory from a health-psychology perspective will now be provided, which locates this thesis into the literature that exists. This is

especially so when addressing sexual communication within the family context, which is the main aim of this thesis.

### **3.6 LIMITATIONS OF EXISTING RESEARCH**

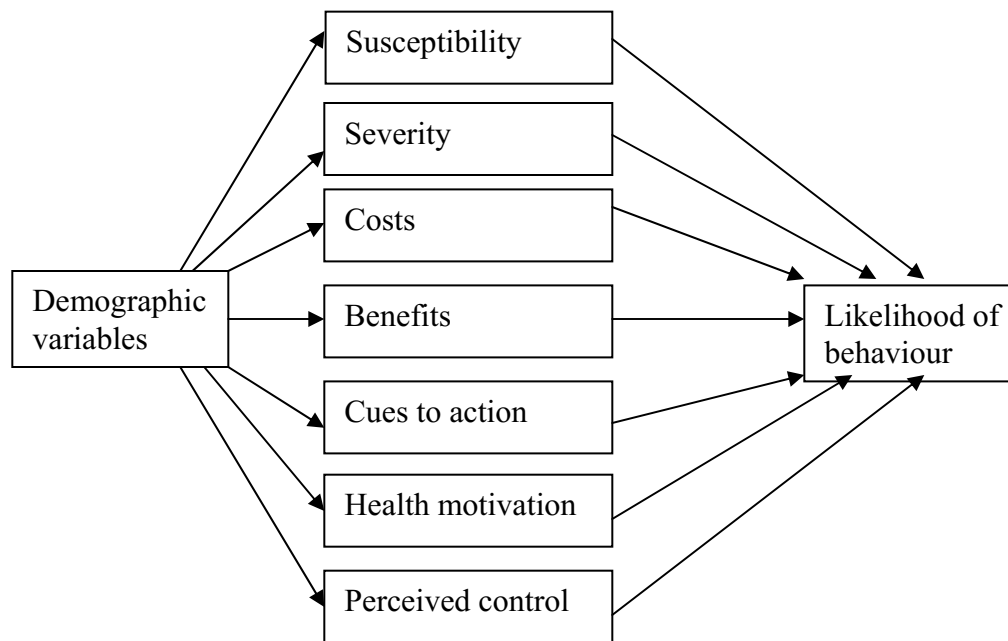
The extant literature of this thesis has examined the history and contemporary issues relating to sex and sexual behaviour. However, more recent studies have used psychological theories to explain young people's sexual behaviour, including avoidance of pregnancy, STI reduction and prevention. This has mainly been through using social-cognition models, highlighting specifically the role of individual cognitions in the context of a relationship. For example, developmental models and decision-making models have been beneficial and widely used when understanding contraceptive use and the sexual behaviour of young people.

Developmental models have suggested that contraception use occurs through a series of stages, which are related to sexual experience and one's self-concept. According to Lindermann (1977) the likelihood of using contraception increases through three stages: *Stage 1: Natural stage*. Intercourse unplanned and therefore no need to use contraception; *Stage 2: Peer prescription stage*. Individuals seek contraceptive advice from friends as sexual intercourse is more frequent, but less effective contraceptive methods are used; and *Stage 3: Expert stage*. Sex becomes part of the individuals' self-concept and professional advice is sought, and contraceptive use is planned. A further behavioural model similar to Lindermann's (1977) series of stages to contraceptive use was proposed by Rains (1971) who focused upon individual beliefs and when they perceive sexual intercourse was right for them. According to Rains increased contraception use involves: (1) falling in love; (2) being in a long-term relationship; (3) perceiving sex to be an acceptable behaviour; and (4)

accepting that they are sexually active and plan to have sex in the future. Rains suggests that by Stage 4 individuals reliably use contraception after they have had personal experiences of Stages 1-3. However, *behavioural models* relating to contraceptive use and sexual activity have been criticised because they cannot analyse the cognitions that promote transition at the different series of stages within the model. Furthermore, they do not examine the psychological factors that can be predictors or precursors to contraceptive use, which decision-making models have attempted to achieve (Sheeran, White and Phillips, 1991).

*Decision-making models* have considered individual cognitions with regards to contraceptive use (e.g. costs and benefits); how these cognitions occur within the context of a relationship (e.g. interactions, commitment and frequency of sexual intercourse); and, within the broader social context, when using contraception (e.g. norms of peers, social attitudes). Although most decision-making models use the subjective expected utility theory (SEU) (Edwards, 1954) to predict individuals' views of the costs and benefits to particular sexual behaviours Sheeran et al. (1991) have criticised these models. This is mainly because individuals weigh up the costs and benefits of becoming pregnant and compare these with the costs and benefits of using contraception, which according to Sheeran et al. (1991) undermines women in that contraception has not costs and pregnancy has not benefits. Similarly the five-component model that includes general attitudes towards contraception (Reiss, Banwart & Foreman, 1975) and the sexual-behaviour sequence model that includes emotional responses (Byrne, Jazwinski, DeNinno & Fisher, 1977) have also been a useful decision-making models when considering the variables that predict contraceptive use. However, the health belief model (HBM) has received more

attention and has been more widely used as it predicts contraception use when measuring individual cognitions in the broader social context (Murray & Miller, 1993; Noar & Zimmerman, 2005; Pitts & Phillips). Figure 1 gives a pictorial representation of the HBM and its components.



*Figure 1. Visual representation of the HBM*

The HBM was initially developed by Rosenstock in 1966 and then developed upon further by Becker in 1974. The model predicts that the core beliefs: susceptibility to illness; the severity of illness; the costs involved in carrying out a health-promoting behaviour; the benefits involved in carrying out the behaviour and cues to action predict the likelihood that the behaviour will actually occur. Using Rosenstock's HBM it has been found that individual cognitions such as self-esteem, knowledge and attitudes about sex and contraception, interpersonal skills, peers norms and substance use prior to sex can predict contraceptive use (Dardano & Burkman, 2000; Katatsky, 1977; Lowe & Radius, 1982). However, the HBM has been criticised for not accounting for the interrelationship between the core variables and the static approach

to health beliefs (Fisher, 1977; Schwarzer, 1992). Furthermore, Leventhal, Prohaska and Hirschman (1985) argue that an individual's perception of symptoms to a health-related behaviour is more likely to predict behaviour rather than the individual factors given in the HBM. However, these decision-making models have been useful in predicting the variables that increase contraceptive use, although not to the same degree as social cognition models when studying contraceptive use to avoid pregnancy and prevent STIs.

The HBM was adapted by McCusker, Stoddard, Zapka and Meyer (1989) to become a social-cognition model incorporating information on an individual's cognitive state, which has led to understanding cognitions associated with condom use. They found that perceived susceptibility was related to condom use in homosexual men and that the best predictor in using condoms was related to previous risk-taking behaviour. McCusker et al. (1989) therefore claim that the HBM was beneficial in that it suggests condom use is a habitual behaviour. However, according to Abraham and Sheeran (1994) the HBM can not predict when condoms are most likely to be used, as it fails to address individual perceptions to gain a consensus of severity; does not acknowledge personal susceptibility and does not explain how personal beliefs are related to behaviour. Therefore, as a means of addressing some of these issues in the domain of health promotion the theory of reasoned action (TRA – see Figure 2) and the theory of planned behaviour (TPB – see Figure 3) have been used to predict health behaviours.



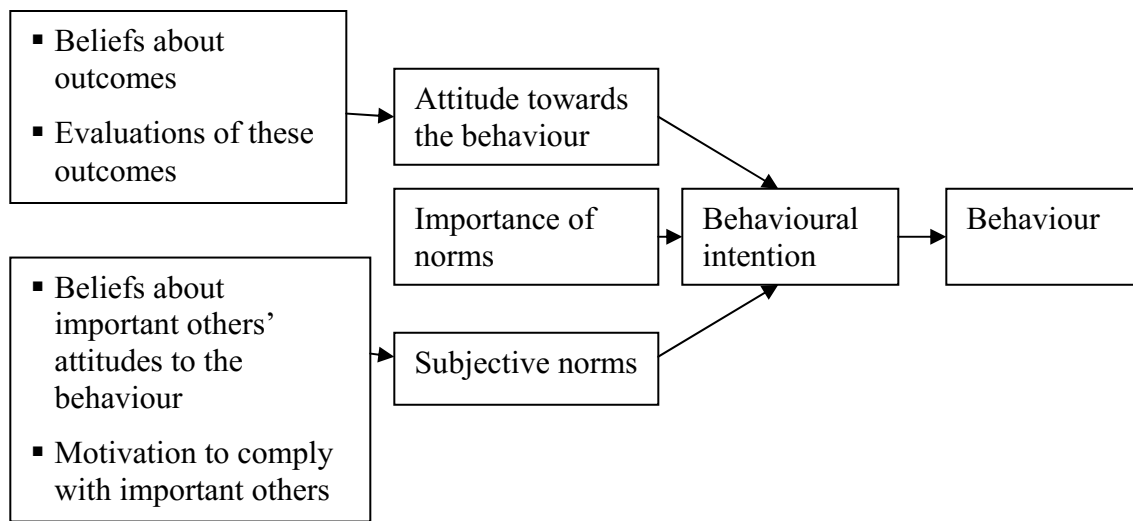


Figure 2. Visual representation of the TRA

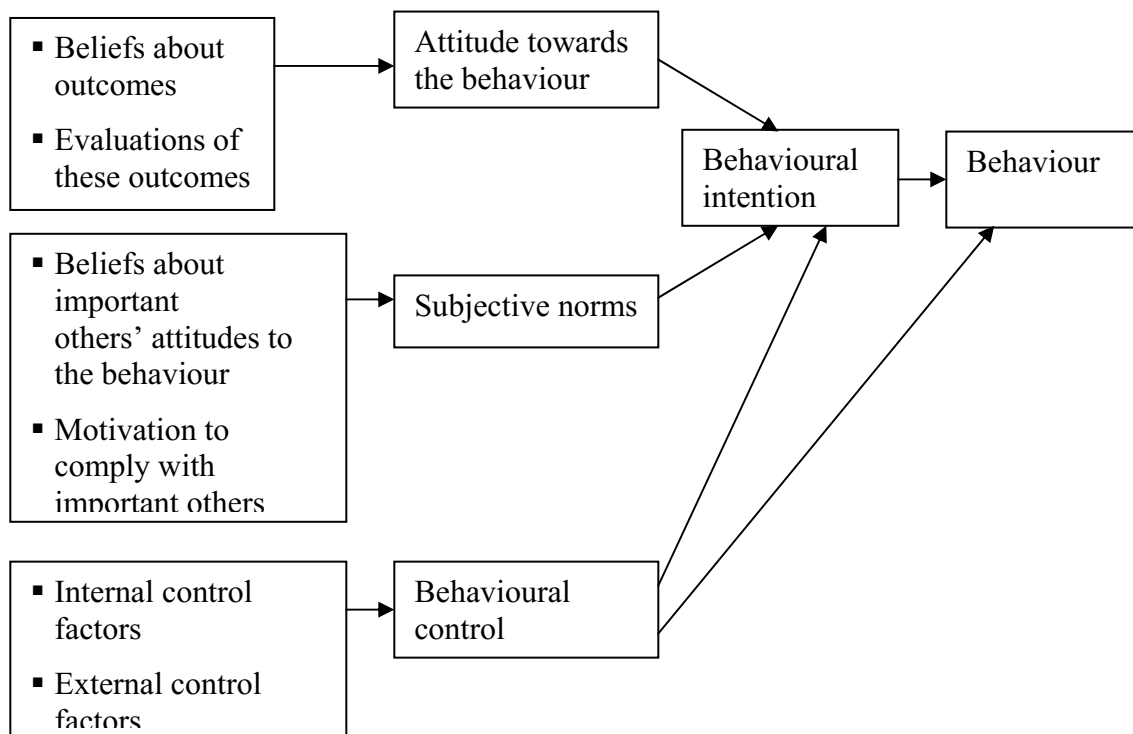


Figure 3. Visual representation of the TPB

The TRA has been extensively used to examine predictors of behaviours and the relationship between attitudes and behaviour (Fishbein, 1967; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1970; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). The model emphasises social cognitions in relation to

an individual's beliefs about their social world (e.g. subjective norms). In addition, it allows for individual beliefs to be evaluated, which influence their attitude towards a particular behaviour. The main value of the TRA is that it places individual attitudes and beliefs in a social context. However, the TRA omitted control factors and the individual control people have over their behaviour. Hence, the TRA was modified and later became known as the TPB (Ajzen, 1985; Ajzen & Maddon, 1986; Ajzen, 1988). An extension of the TRA can be seen in Figure 3, which details the components of the TPB.

Since the TPB emphasises that beliefs govern behavioural intentions, the model has been widely used in relation to sexual issues. This is not only with regards to pregnancy avoidance (Dye et al. 2005; Saunders, 2005), adolescents' contraceptive use (Bayley, Brown & Wallace, 2009; Peyman & Oakley, 2008) but also in sex education programs that are designed to educate children and adolescents, providing them with the sexual knowledge to make informed choices over their sexual behaviour and relationships (Abraham, Henderson & Der, 2004; Cha et al. 2007). Although the TPB considers social and environmental factors as well as past behaviours that measure perceived behavioural control the model has been criticised for not describing either in which different beliefs influence other components in the model or the direction of causality between the beliefs (Schwarzer, 1992). However, because the TPB is a social-cognition model that considers subjective norms, perceived behavioural control and attitudes towards a behaviour it was considered for the present research when investigating SRE within the family context. Unfortunately, the TPB, like the other theories discussed, excludes the process of communication, which was one of the main components of the present research. Moreover, these theories do not

provide a means to model change in behaviour over time as a result of communication. It was therefore important to address SRE communication within the family context using a psychological basis that at the same time addressed factors outside families. For this reason the modified grounded theory method was chosen as it used in-depth qualitative analyses to explore the area of SRE communication within families, which had not been investigated previously using this method. A more in-depth account of the research aims and considerations of research methods are provided in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

### **3.7 SUMMARY**

The introductory chapters of this thesis have provided an insight into sex and sexual behaviour from the past to the present. This chapter has highlighted the many elements that can be used as predictors of young people's sexual health and knowledge. Parents' behaviour is very important in the influence they can have over the knowledge, attitudes and sexual behaviour of their children. Therefore, this investigation aims to develop a model that explains the barriers and facilitators of sexual communication within families whilst using an SRE multimedia program. Before presenting the findings to this research, considerations will be given to the theoretical framework and the grounded theory approach that was used.

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## **CHAPTER 4**

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### **AIMS, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND CONSIDERATION OF RESEARCH METHODS**

## **CONTENTS**

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## **4.1 OVERVIEW**

Chapter 4 of this thesis will detail the process by which the methodological design of this research was derived to correspond with the aims of the study. The aims and research questions are presented and the research paradigm and the philosophical underpinnings of the chosen methodological approach will be discussed in relation to the data collection and analysis for this study.

## **4.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND AIMS**

Previous research has used both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies to offer various findings and explanations concerning what inhibit and exhibits parents communicating SRE matters with their children (Chung, Borneo, Kilpatrick, Lopez, Travis, Lui et al. 2005; DiIorio, Hockenberry-Etaon, Maibach, Rivero, & Miller, 1996; Lederman, & Mian, 2003; Pluhar & Kuriloff, 2004). However, there is paucity in this area of research among British families in relation to the many psychosocial factors that can impact and affect communication processes within and between family members.

It is the overall aim of this study to explore communication about sexual and relationship issues in British families. Three main research questions will be examined: (1) What are people's opinions of SRE within their families and what can be observed regarding their communication about sexual matters? (2) What happens in a family when a multimedia SRE programme is introduced in the presence of a researcher; how do families evaluate the programme; and what is the effect of this programme on both family members communication on, and knowledge of SRE topics? And (3) What happens to communication in a family and a family's perception of the SRE programme and their knowledge on SRE topics when the SRE multimedia

is left in the family for a week without the presence of the researcher? Therefore, the subsidiary aims of this study are to:

- identify the potential facilitators and barriers within families for discussing SRE;
- explore the interpersonal communication between parents and their children when discussing aspects of SRE during the use of a sex education multimedia program as a means of facilitating and removing barriers to communication;
- examine the effects of the multimedia program on the knowledge and confidence of SRE of parents and their children;
- develop an SRE communication model for families.

For the intervention, the SRE multimedia program used as an intervention in the study was the Sense CD described in Chapter 6.

### **4.3 DESIGN**

The research intended to firstly explore how British families discussed sexual matters. It was important to identify how each family communicated sexual matters before introducing the intervention. To assess the impact of the multimedia program families' sexual-knowledge and confidence were measured at the different stages of the research. This was before the intervention was introduced, after families had explored the multimedia program with the researcher present and when families were left alone to explore the intervention together as a family. Conducting the research in this way allowed for an SRE communication model to be developed, exploring the barriers and facilitators for discussing sexual matters and implementing the role of the multimedia program. The stages of the research are presented in Figure 4:

| Exploration   | Intervention   |  | SRE model   |   |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| <i>Pre-intervention</i>   | <i>Intervention 1</i>  | <i>Post-intervention</i>   | <i>Intervention 2</i>   | <i>Follow-up</i>  |
| In-depth interview with the family separately. Pre sexual-knowledge questionnaire given | Exploration multimedia program as a family together and separately | Post sexual-knowledge questionnaire given to parents and their children to complete separately | Family are left with the multimedia program to explore as a family or separately (1 week given) | Follow-up interview where follow-up sexual-knowledge questionnaire was given to parents and children separately |

Figure 4: Visual account for the design of the research

#### 4.4 CONSIDERATION OF RESEARCH METHODS

In the social sciences, particularly in the domain of psychology, quantitative research is often contrasted with qualitative research. This is mainly as quantitative and qualitative research approaches have very different paradigms (Creswell, 1994) and philosophical differences (Depoy & Gitlin, 1994). According to Cohen & Manion (1994, p.6) “research paradigms are themselves rooted in philosophical assumptions”. Notably quantitative research is seen as a historical form of research and may be termed as a positivist, or empiricist approach, which serves to provide answers to questions concerning relationships when using measured variables (Cohen & Manion, 1994). It is a deductive form of research as it starts with hypotheses that are subsequently tested. For this reason it is termed a *top-down* approach to research, which generally uses numerical data to provide overall conclusions to hypotheses (Patton, 1987). Alternatively qualitative research is concerned with exploring, describing, and understanding the phenomena that are being investigated. It is known as inductive research as it begins from specific aims or observations to generate



broader general explanations to develop theory or understanding to a particular phenomenon (Gibbs, 2002). However, qualitative research has also been known to employ a deductive as well as an inductive approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Qualitative research has been termed an interpretive, constructivist, post-positivistic and naturalistic approach to research (Mason, 2002, p.2). The properties and stark differences between the two approaches can be seen more clearly in Table 1, which is derived from Bogdan and Biklen (2003) and also Patton's (1987) characteristics of quantitative and qualitative research methods.

Table 1

*Quantitative and qualitative research*

| Quantitative Research  | Qualitative Research  |
|--|---|
| Relies on numbers/statistics to interpret data                   | Relies on words to describe and interpret data                    |
| Uses deductive reasoning   | Uses inductive reasoning  |
| Tests hypotheses   | Generates hypotheses  |
| Deductive  | Inductive/deductive   |
| A structured design is employed                                  | A non-structured design is used                                   |
| Random, large sample size  | Purposive, small sample size                                      |
| Data analysis can be less time-consuming                         | Data analysis can be more time-consuming                          |
| Findings can be generalised                                      | Findings cannot be generalised                                    |
| Less contact needed with participants to collect data            | Researcher in close contact with participants to collect data     |
| Researcher is more distant from the research and data collection | Researcher is more involved with the research and data collection |

Because quantitative and qualitative research has different purposes in research, distinctions have been made between the two opposing traditions. According to Cohen and Manion (1994), these opposing traditions stem from being objectivist and subjectivist. Objectivist traditions are mainly concerned with objective assessments of clearly defined variables (normally quantitative in nature), whereas subjectivist traditions are based more on the judgements of particular events or occurrences. Miles

and Huberman (1994, p. 8) also refer to these traditions as positivistic and phenomenological. ‘Interpretivist’ and ‘constructivist’ have also been used as synonyms in relation to phenomenology. According to Burrell and Morgan (1979) these antithetical dimensions are distinguishable from an ontological, epistemological, methodological and human-nature viewpoint. This can be seen more clearly in Figure 5.

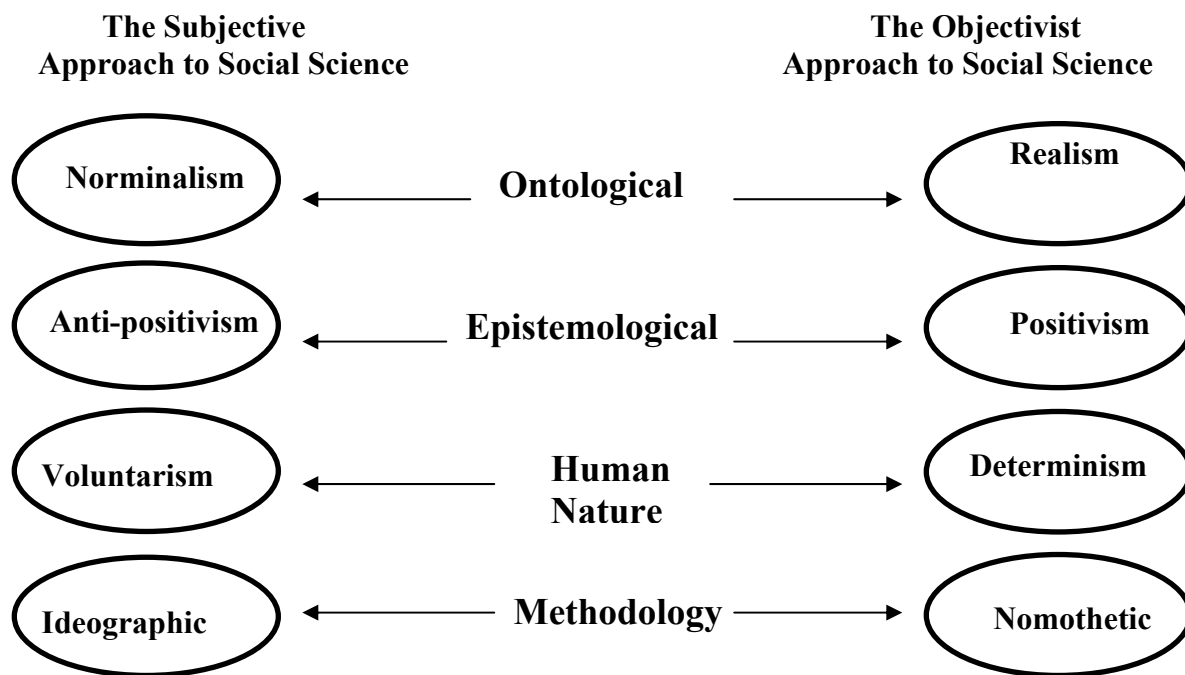


Figure 5. Philosophical assumptions and dimensions of social science research (Adapted from Burrell and Morgan, 1979)

Although it is important to apply the philosophical assumptions, and dimensions detailed in Figure 4 to the present research, it is essential that a description of the concepts are given in order to understand how the present research relates to the paradigm preferences.

*Ontological* refers to the nature of reality. For example, reality is subjective if it is concerned with examining the perceptions of others (e.g. participants) when employing qualitative methods such as grounded theory to analyse the data (e.g.

grounded theory). In contrast, if the researcher views the social world to be objective and external then one would adopt a quantitative approach to analyse the data (e.g. factor analysis). The types of research methods would be dependent upon the aims of the research and therefore the researcher would need to select the most appropriate method to analyse the data they collect.

*Epistemological* refers to how the data is collected and measured. For example, a qualitative researcher would consider collecting data that can be observed and measured, which employs a subjective stance. In contrast, if a quantitative approach was to be taken the researcher would conduct research that involves experiments based on events to try to understand the phenomenon under investigation, as much as possible.

*Human Nature* refers to a set of characteristics (e.g. feeling and thinking) that are regarded as 'normal'. These characteristics relate to the things that people have in common. For example, a quantitative researcher would consider participants' previous experiences, present concerns, and plans for the future. In contrast, if a qualitative approach was taken the researcher would place more emphasis on events and happenings that had happened in the past and in the present situation. This would therefore exclude future characteristics that are perceived to be outside people's control and over which they have no influence.

*Methodological* refers to the scientific method that has been chosen to conceptualise the data. For example, a qualitative researcher would be concerned with emphasising data collected from particular individuals. In contrast, a quantitative researcher would be more concerned with making inferences and predictions based on the findings from the whole group of participants.

In essence, the subjective dimension is concerned with the experiences of individuals and their own beliefs, or interpretations of the social world. However, from the perspective of the objective dimension, individuals are primarily influenced by what one observes from the social world.

Although the work of Burrell and Morgan (1979) has received interest when considering the postulations of the social world in relation to organisational analysis, their approach to the assumptions of social-science research in sociology and psychology has also been well documented as supporting a qualitative approach (Johnson & Cassell, 2001; Mitroff, 1983). However, according to Burrell and Morgan (1979), the two approaches to social-science research detailed in Figure 4 are not intended to be viewed as dichotomies, but instead suggest that the strands are used on a continuum:

*“... in practice there is often a strong relationship between the positions on each of the ... strands”*

(Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 7).

They furthermore go on to suggest that different positions from the two can be selected as long as they can be justified in relation to the aims of the research, which is to be conducted. The philosophical assumptions and positions of Burrell and Morgan's (1979) dimensions seem an appropriate choice for the present investigation, which will now be discussed in relation to the aims of the present research.

This research was undertaken in the belief that social reality as perceived by participants (parents and their children) is subjective and that they will have some different viewpoints about the potential facilitators and barriers when discussing SRE matters which help them to structure reality. The problem is that people may not know and therefore not be able to relate facilitators and barriers; consequently, important

facilitators and barriers may remain unknown. However, it is assumed that to some degree they will use names, concepts and labels that are artificial symbols to help structure what they perceive as reality or in the explanation of it. However, this research has a more specific association with *Realism* from an ontological viewpoint. Realism infers that the real world has complex, intangible structures that exist regardless of the labels that individuals attach to explain a given situation or circumstance. In other words, ‘Is the world different to how we as individuals actually view it?’ ‘Is our meaning and interpretation different from how the world actually is?’ This has been a key debate between many theorists since the 1960s, which is still ongoing (Doppelt, 1978; Harre & Secord, 1972; Kuhn, 1962; Suppe, 1977; Peter & Olson, 1983). However, according to some theorists (Bhaskar, 1977, 1978, 1989; Harre, 1974; Pawson & Tilley, 1997) a realist account of social phenomena is that it is real although dependent upon the activity, concepts and time, all of which have an effect on each other through the investigative process. A practical account of realism has been provided by Robson (2002) who explains the principles of realism by using the example of a gunpowder explosion when using the following diagram (see Figure 6).

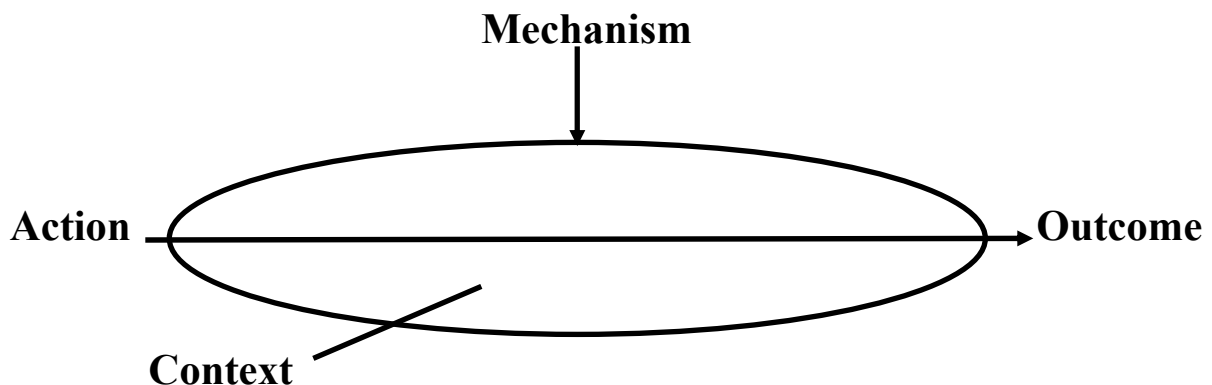


Figure 6. Representation of realist explanation (Robson, 2002, p. 31)

Robson (2002) asks the question “Does gunpowder blow up when a flame is applied?” The logical answer is ‘yes’. However, for the explosion to actually occur, several other factors also need to be correct. For example, the gunpowder mixture needs to be dry for it to ignite; the correct amount of gunpowder and other ingredients need to be of exact composition; oxygen is needed and furthermore enough heat needs to be applied. So in terms of realism the outcome → explosion; action → administering sufficient heat; mechanism → correct components of the gunpowder are produced and finally, the context → certain conditions are met so the reaction can occur. Due to physics, chemistry and previous experimentation we know that Robson’s (2002) event could occur. However, we may not be able to see the ins-and-outs of it ourselves and if we were asked to give a running commentary of how the explosion could occur, it would be described differently between individuals. Ultimately though that is not to say that we would not all reach the same verdict and a firm agreement would be made (i.e. an explosion will occur if the correct proportions of gunpowder are heated). So while it is difficult to detect the exact mechanisms of how individuals derive the same conclusion, there is evidence for realism. However, certain criteria have been suggested to ensure the position of realism from an ontological dimension when carrying out research in the real world.

Realism is more than simply the assertion that reality exists independent of our awareness to it. In essence, it provides a meaningful model for science (Blaikie, 1993; Byrne, 1998; Robson, 2002), which is not only theory-laden through facts, but also value-laden in that through observation it is possible to unearth the real mechanisms and structures underlying perceived events (Bhaskar, 1986). However, in order for researchers to provide a meaningful model of the phenomenon being investigated they

need to have substantial knowledge of the phenomenon that they are interested in. It is only then through theory and observation they develop knowledge and understanding of what mechanisms have caused an outcome and of the context in which by further mechanisms can be triggered to have an effect on the overall outcome (Robson, 2002). For example, in social sciences it is possible to be realistic about meaning by establishing scientific investigation. In reality, Robson (2002) suggests the application of realism to non-experimental research. According to Robson (2002) it is possible to use a flexible, but fixed dichotomy to carry out research. Robson (2002, p. 31) suggests a fixed design can be used to analyse non-experimental data, which is then supported by quantitative analyses to prove, or disprove findings. Although the work of Robson supports similar claims of Patton (1990), Robson (2002, p. 87) states *“While a design cannot be fixed and flexible at the same time, it could have a flexible phase followed by a fixed phase (or more rarely, the reverse sequence). Or there could be a separate flexible element within an otherwise to fixed design.”* In addition Robson claims *“A flexible design strategy evolves during data collection. Data are typically non-numerical, usually in the form of words, hence this strategy is often referred to as a qualitative strategy.”* An illustration of realism in relation to the present research can be seen in Table 2, which is based on some of the research findings detailed in Chapter 1 of this thesis.

Table 2

*Realism and mechanisms for this research*

| <b>Research Scenario</b>   |
|--|
| <p><i>An experienced researcher wanted to identify the potential barriers for not discussing SRE matters when utilising an educational multimedia program providing facts and information on puberty, the human body, and sex and sexual relationships. Parent(s) and their child(ren) were interviewed before and after exploring the computer program to identify if it facilitates communication in families and improves knowledge.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Perhaps parents did not feel they had the up-to-date sexual knowledge to have a talk to their child(ren) about sexual matters.</li> <li>2. Perhaps parents did not have the verbal ability to discuss sensitive issues with their children.</li> <li>3. Perhaps the parents were not taught about sexual matters when they were younger.</li> <li>4. Perhaps parents were not approachable.</li> <li>5. Perhaps parents were at work a lot of the time and did not get time to discuss sexual matters with their children.</li> </ol> <p><i>The following mechanisms could be applied:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A lack of knowledge mechanism (1 and 3);</li> <li>• A communication mechanism (2 and 4);</li> <li>• A distant relationship mechanism.</li> </ul> <p>Example adapted from Hall and Hall (1996, p. 31)</p> |

To summarise, this research is positioned both at the nominal and realism ends of dimensions because it is concerned with examining the perceptions of others using qualitative research methods and objective because it uses quantitative research methods to identify another one of the aims by assessing knowledge and confidence of participants. From the viewpoint of the human-nature dimension, both aspects of voluntarism and determinism would be relevant for the present research. Voluntarism is apparent mainly because parent(s) and their child(ren) would be talking about previous experiences, any present concerns and what they would like to happen in the future based on their environment, individual circumstances and family structure. With regards to the characteristics of determinism, participants may exaggerate their present feelings and perceptions and act in a way that disguises how they really feel when



answering questions for the present research. However, how they choose to act and behave in the future would be their choosing, based on past events and the knowledge they acquire over time to make informed choices.

Since the data collected in the current study will be based on exploring parent(s) and their child(rens) opinions when focusing on discussing SRE matters an ideographic position was initially chosen. However, to meet the aims of establishing the effects on knowledge when using the multimedia program nomothetic inquiry is also included in the present research. This is mainly as quantitative tests will be needed to assess the data when using the standardised research tool/intervention (program name is: Sense, Sex and Relationships multimedia program). In relation to the *viewpoint* that is to be employed, based on Burrell and Morgan's (1979) philosophical assumptions a subjective viewpoint was selected. This was as the researcher will be interacting with participants (parents and their children) while conducting interviews to gain a better understanding of the family dynamics when identifying the potential facilitators and barriers to discussing SRE matters.

In summary, the present research could be epistemologically characterised as subjective, employing a phenomenological/interpretivist/constructivist approach since more of the aspects have been met using Burrell and Morgan's (1979) antithetical dimensions and as the data will be qualitative, rich, subjective and will use participant's opinions to generate theory. It was intended as the research is concerned with theory generation; it will be generalisable especially based on the findings from previous research and the views that will be gathered from parent(s) and their child(ren) when evaluating the facilitators and barriers to discussing SRE matters. However, this could be argued by some theorists not to be the case from a realism

point of view, who suggest the concept of realism does not occur (Doppelt, 1978; Kuhn, 1962).

Although the present research intends to have the qualities encompassed in a phenomenological/interpretist/constructivist methodological approach, to a smaller extent it also has a positivistic angle in that some of the data being collected will be quantitative in nature. This will mainly be from an assessment of knowledge from the multimedia program, which will match to the questions that will be asked when interviewing participants. The results will provide a preliminary indication of the program's effectiveness, to be confirmed in larger-scale future research with more generalisable samples. Although no formal hypotheses were proposed for the present research, aims were developed to assist in constructing a model to ultimately explain the facilitators and barriers to discussing SRE matters within families. As previously discussed, the research is positioned in a subjectivist tradition and therefore features are characteristic of this type of research.

#### **4.5. SUMMARY**

Chapter 4 of this thesis has considered the underlying principles and assumptions associated with the design, methods and analyses of the current study and the data that were collected. Chapter 5 considers potential methodologies that could be used to accommodate the present research before going on to discuss why the modified grounded theory method was chosen to collect and analyse the data for the present research.

---

## **CHAPTER 5**

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**THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:  
RATIONALE FOR SELECTING THE MODIFIED  
GROUNDED THEORY APPROACH**

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## **5.1 OVERVIEW**

Within Chapter 5 of this thesis, a rationale as to why the grounded theory method was the chosen methodological approach will be given. As the present research has subjectivist characteristics of a qualitative nature using inductive and deductive reasoning, other types of qualitative methodology could have been employed. Examples of these will be discussed and the reasons for their non-adoption given. This chapter will also provide a discussion on the philosophical emergence of grounded theory as a method before providing a detailed explanation of how it applies to the present research. This will include a rationale for the adoption of Strauss and Corbin's (1990) modified grounded-theory approach as most appropriate for the design, data collection and analysis in the present research.

## **5.2 ALTERNATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROCHES**

This research takes a qualitative stance as it is concerned with exploring, describing and understanding the potential barriers to parents discussing SRE matters with their children. The philosophical assumptions of using a phenomenological/interpretivist/constructivist approach have been discussed in relation to the different positions associated with qualitative-research approaches. However, several types of research methodology may be used that employ an inductive/deductive approach.

Deduction and induction are two aspects of research that impact upon the scientific research process of conducting research. Deduction is often the predominant process in quantitative research, however some would argue that it is virtually impossible to separate the two approaches and that induction and deduction are linked when undertaking research, especially qualitative research (Miles & Huberman 1993, p. 40). This is because pure induction aims to build a theory using a clean theoretical

slate (no assumptions) and deduction aims to test particular theories. However, according to Richards (1993, p. 40) both induction and deduction are always involved in research, often simultaneously. Support for these claims came previously from the well-known philosopher Popper who suggests that all data is theory-loaded and that a continuous interplay exists between the two (Popper, 1972). However, Popper's (1972) claims challenged the existing Baconian method and has himself since been criticised by the philosopher Kuhn (1962), using the concept of scientific revolution when attempting to understand scientific methodology.

Some time ago in the 17<sup>th</sup>-century Francis Bacon established an effective scientific method, which was based on the ascendance of observational evidence (Cohen & Manion, 1994, p. 3). According to the Bacon's, induction emerges from postulations (hypotheses) that are tested by identifying common factors through observation. Validity is then tested (deduction) by re-examining emergent theory to confirm whether the observations fit in with unfamiliar environments (Cohen & Manion, 1994, p. 528). Bacon's scientific method was at one time seen as law and went onto to be refined by generations of fellow scientists. It was not publicly challenged until the 20<sup>th</sup> century when Karl Popper disputed Bacon's method for its inductive characteristics. Popper (1959) attempted to invalidate Bacon's law by stating *"No matter how many instances of white swans we may observe, this does not justify the conclusion that all swans are white"*. In essence, Popper's (1959) principles were concerned with falsification. He suggested that hypotheses are derived from a collection of facts. These facts are then tested by trying to falsify the findings and it is only by continuing and repeating this process that hypotheses are accepted or rejected. Although Popper's (1959) principles of falsification take a deductive approach to the

testing of theories, it has also been linked with the work of Medewer (1996) as it forms the scientific practice of a hypothetico-deductive system, which is based on the formulation of a hypothesis derived from a collection of facts that test a hypothesis by attempting to falsify it. More facts are collected until either falsification fails or the hypothesis is agreed upon.

Although Popper (1959) initially offered a deductive approach to problem solving within qualitative research, Kuhn (1962) had at the time vehemently attacked Popper's approach as being incomplete and inadequate since it does not attempt to solve puzzles within research and data collection (Harrison-Barbet, 2001). According to Kuhn (1962) there are anomalies for all paradigms, which have various levels of significance at the time of research collection. Kuhn (1962) suggests that each of these anomalies need to be explored, which leads to a new paradigm to emerge and for theory to fit the data. It is with this that Kuhn (1962) suggests his theory was revolutionary, whilst Popper's (1959) theory remains stagnant coming from an evolutionary perspective, which attempts to fit data collected into a theoretical basis when using a falsification method. The controversy between Karl Popper (1902-1994) and Thomas Kuhn (1922-1996) has continued and contributed to the long-standing debate that surrounds scientific methodologies. However, there are some theorists that accept 'pure induction' needs to have some theoretical basis to be able to generate beneficial theory, just as 'pure deduction' needs to ensure that it does not prevent new and useful theories from developing (Parkhe, 1987, p. 253). Combining induction and deduction in this way not only allows for statistical generalisations using deduction, but also induction helps with developing theory that can assist in the development of future deductive research. Although each approach may differ in relation to internal

consistency, it is possible for both quantitative and qualitative research to answer different questions, which, when combined, can provide a ‘single, well integrated picture of the situation’ to the research being conducted (Patton, 1990, p. 464). According to Perry and Jenson (2001) there are five qualitative approaches that can be used to combine the qualities of both deduction and induction. A summary of these is given in Figure 7.

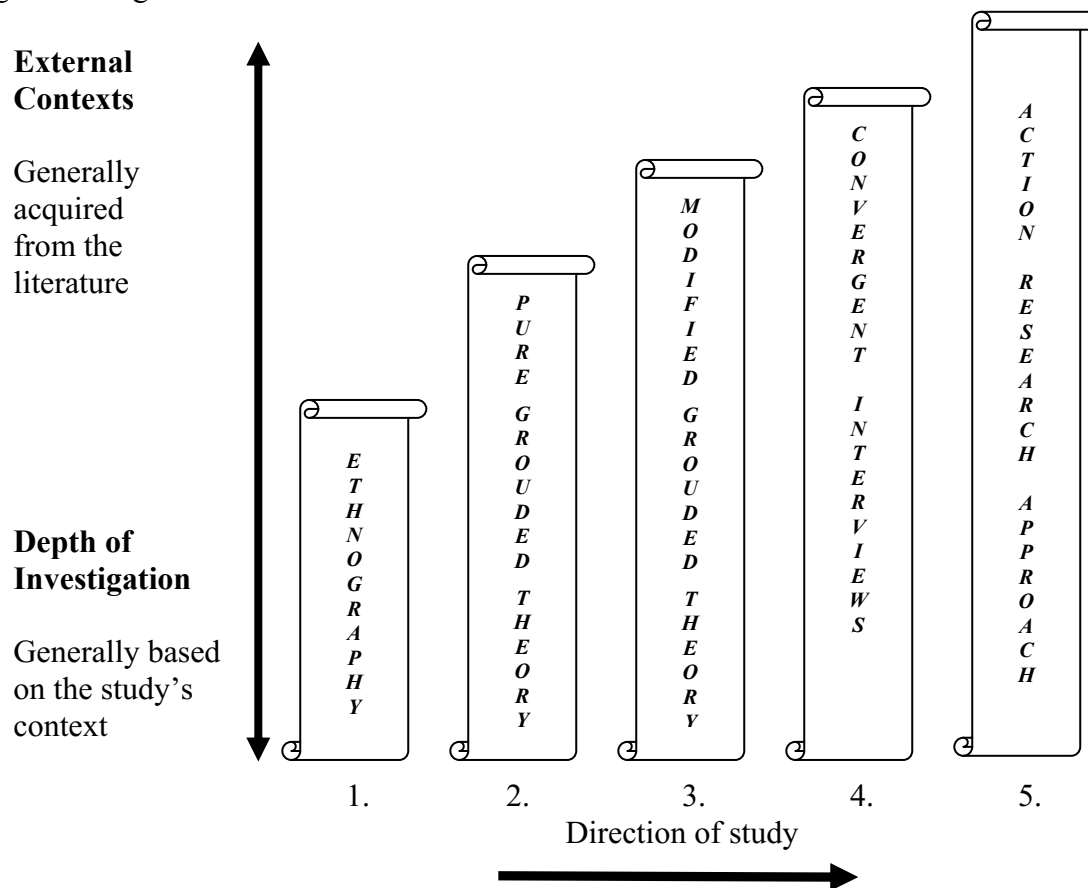


Figure 7. Qualitative approaches to deduction and induction Combined (adapted from Perry and Jenson, 2001)

A brief explanation of these research approaches will now be given, highlighting the chosen deductive/inductive approach for the present research.

### Ethnography

Ethnography is a multi-method qualitative approach that is interested in specifically examining social settings. Ethnography has associations with anthropology, social



anthropology and the Chicago school. According to Atkinson, Coffey, Delamont, Lofland and Lofland (2001, p. 4) ethnography is “*grounded in a commitment to the first-hand experience and exploration of a particular social or cultural setting on the basis of (though not exclusive by) participant observation*”. In essence, ethnography is concerned with investigating how people construct and make sense of their social world, incorporating qualities of symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969; Mead, 1934 and Thomas, 1931). It requires researchers to become immersed with the participants to record, categorise and code data to fit in with the particular aims of the research. However, this research approach has been under attack for its lack of combining deductive and inductive approaches to collecting data and instead relies heavily on deduction as a method to understand and describe the main characteristics of the phenomenon being investigated (Perry & Jenson, 2001).

Although an ethnographic approach would have been an interesting approach for the present investigation based on the observations that could have been made within families, it would not have been suitable, as the primary aim of the research was to develop a model that best described effective SRE communication processes within families. Furthermore, when developing theory, a structured inductive and deductive format is required when analysing both qualitative and quantitative data in order to encapsulate the fuller picture of the phenomenon, as in the present investigation. According to Perry and Jenson (2001, p.5) ethnography methods of data collection do not provide a consistent way of combining deduction and deduction and, therefore, findings are limited in that they can only be compared to other similar research and the literature concerning the phenomenon being investigated.

## **The Pure Grounded Theory**

The grounded theory was firstly introduced by Glaser and Strauss (1967) in “*The Discovery of Grounded Theory*”. This will be discussed in further detail below when comparing it with the modified approach of grounded theory method.

## **A ‘Modified’ Grounded Theory approach**

A modified grounded theory was proposed by Strauss & Corbin (1990). The two approaches to the grounded theory method will now be discussed.

In essence, the grounded theory method analyses data collected by way of conducting interviews and proceeds through different types of coding and theoretical sampling techniques to allow a theoretical model to emerge. The original grounded theory approach has been described as an “*inductive theory, discovery methodology that allows the researcher to develop a theoretical account of the general features of a topic while simultaneously grounding the account in empirical observations of data*” (Martin & Turner, 1986, p.141). The original grounded-theory was classified as purely inductive in that Glaser was, and still is, strongly against the use of previous literature to influence the interpretation of data when conceptualising findings and the emergence of theory (Glaser, 1998). This position contrasts with Strauss and Corbin’s (1998, p. 136) who developed upon the original grounded-theory method and who encouraged the use of previous literature to help form categories for investigation of a particular phenomenon. Therefore, they claim their grounded-theory method encompasses an inductive and deductive approach. They suggest that although statements of relationships and hypotheses emerge from data as they are collected, to some degree researchers are interpreting the data that is emerging, which is influenced by knowledge, information that has been obtained and the effect this has on theories as

they emerge. Through this process they suggest their grounded theory method interplays between induction and deduction as data are analysed. However, this is not the only difference between the original and Strauss and Corbin's (1990) revised version of the grounded-theory method. These differences will be discussed in detail later as they are pertinent to this research. However, two other methodologies that employ an inductive/deductive approach were also considered in relation to the present study.

### **Convergent Interviews**

Convergent interviews are an iterative technique in which several interviews are conducted to investigate a particular phenomenon. Data collected from the in-depth interviews allow for further questions to be developed and asked in successive interviews in order to contradict emerging data. According to Dick (1990, p. 3) convergent interviews are a series of 'successive approximations' in that the data collected are continually refined. However, only data that are agreed upon by each interviewee can be converged to provide a solution or explanation to the phenomenon being investigated. Hence, data are being rejected as they may not be agreed upon by all those interviewed (Dick, 1990, p. 4).

Although convergent interviews can provide data to potentially explain phenomena when employing an inductive approach this method was rejected for the present investigation as it does not have the qualities to produce theory in that it omits potential lines of research being investigated and saturation to be reached (Perry & Jenson, 2001). The final approach to combining induction and deduction to research is that of the action research, which will now be discussed.

## **Action Research Approach**

Action research is also referred to as '*Participatory Action Research*' (PAR), which focuses upon the effect of researchers' direct actions of practice within a community, where the goal is to improve the performance or quality of the community it concerns (Dick, 2002; Hult & Lenning, 1980; McNiff, 2002; Reason & Bradbury, 2001). To use action research, a systematic cyclical approach is followed, which includes 1) planning, 2) taking action, 3) observing, d) evaluating (including evaluation of researchers' own actions) and 5) to critically evaluate the whole action research process. Using this approach allows researchers to identify a problem, which focuses on the change of actions, with the hope that it will improve practice in the future (Checkland & Holwell, 1998; Dick, 2002; Hult & Lennung, 1980).

Although PAR has been found to be a useful method in identifying and changing group behaviour and perspectives (Dick, 2002) it did not seem appropriate for the present investigation when researching sensitive issues based on individual (and not group) behaviours and actions. The present investigation sought to identify, understand, describe and develop a model based on communication within families and to do this each individual participant's views were needed and to be built upon for theory to be generated. The revised version of the grounded theory method was the chosen qualitative approach for the present investigation as it encompasses a deductive/inductive approach. To understand the purposeful use of this method it is important to have an appreciation of its longstanding roots in qualitative research.

## **5.3 THE PSYCHOLOGICAL BASIS OF GROUNDED THEORY**

In 1967, the grounded theory entered the world of qualitative research methods. This approach was initially proposed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967) at a time

when sociology and other human sciences research in the USA was mainly concerned with asking pre-formed questions based on the particular research aims (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998); therefore, research was often reliant on quantitative methodologies (Hammersley, 1989). The inauguration of grounded theory contrasted with the use of quantitative research methods in that researchers used Glaser and Strauss's (1967) qualitative approach to develop *theory* from research material; this possibility had not being previously explored (Diesing, 1971).

Grounded theory has been reported as being popular among academics in the USA, especially since it “*spearheaded into the qualitative revolution of Social Sciences*” (Weiss, 1995). However, Corbetta (2003) notes that grounded theory has had a strong-hold in qualitative research for decades in most European countries, especially within the research domain of Sociology in which its original creators worked. Grounded theory has also become a popular method in other social sciences, especially areas of psychology such as health psychology (Beck, 1993; Charmaz, 1990; Gantt, 1992; Gloersen, Kendall, Gray, & McConnell, 1993; Wilde, Starrin, Larsson, & Larsson, 1993), educational psychology (Alton-Lee & Nuthall, 1992; Rottenberg & Searfoss, 1992) and social psychology (Currie, 1988).

For over 100 years, there have been disagreements between sociologists, psychologists and other disciplines that fall under the umbrella term of social sciences. Although all social sciences are committed to understanding the singular and collective behaviours of humans, psychologists and sociologists have used different methods to understanding and predicting human behaviour. This is mainly because sociologists are interested in understanding group structures and processes, and the relationship between the two. Sociologists tend to focus on an individuals role within particular

social settings whereas, psychologists attempt to understand both the social and mental processes of human beings as a means of predicting and understanding human behaviour. This involves placing more emphasis on understanding thought processes and individual personality characteristics to identify how they change across the lifespan. Both, psychologists and sociologists have different interests in understanding human behaviour. Numerous philosophers have argued for decades as to whether the discipline of 'psychology' has a place in the domain of social sciences.

The German philosopher Wilhem Dilthey (1990 [1883]) questioned the notion of 'understanding' and 'explaining' human beings' behaviour in the light of all social sciences. He proposed a philosophy of psychology and suggested that individuals are 'psycho-physical wholes, each of which are different from the others' therefore, isolating psychology and making it distinct from all other social sciences. However, in 1894 this proposition was challenged by Dilthey's archenemy; Hermann Ebbinghaus (1984 [1894], p. 27), who critiqued Dilthey for over-simplifying the philosophical nature of psychology and personally insulting Dilthey for not being original in his thoughts. The personal insult derived from Dilthey's attempts to follow the work of Herbart (1965 [1862]) and Spencer (1879), who endorsed the early debate between psychology and sociology and who had both died some years earlier to the announcements of Dilthey (1990 [1894]). There is no doubt that Dilthey's Neo-Kantian tradition generated followers in support of his ideas that went against psychologism (Cohen, (1987 [1871]; Makkreel, 1969 & Windelband (1911 [1884])). In essence, 'psychologism' views social behaviour as explicit in generic terms, governed by logical and neurological processes, whereas sociologism is in contrast associated with personal conduct that is programmed by societal norms and expectations

(Michener, Andrew, DeLamater & Myers, 2004). In light of psychologism Dilthey (1990 [1883]) proposed that any epistemology is drawn from some prior psychological assumption or assumptions. He suggested these psychological assumptions should be subject to an empirical investigation that addresses descriptive/analytical psychology. However, in order to test these psychological assumptions Dilthey (1990 [1983]) suggested that they should be furthermore tested by other social theorists, which potentially could have eliminated psychology from the field of social sciences. This was not to be and sociologists (Lazarus & Steinthal, 1997 [1860], pp. 129-130) argued that since human beings are social by nature, elements of psychology are always needed to understand and conceptualise an individual's social world. The elements that Lazarus and Steinthal, (1997 [1860]) refer to are ideas, concepts and representation that can be scientifically tested to show unity of a nation or group, which impact on the individual.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s scientific psychology continued to be driven by Ebbinghaus (1984 [1894], p. 27) and others including Skinner, James, Freud and Wundt, which lead to the introduction of contemporary schools in psychology (i.e. Behaviourism, Gestalt Psychology, Psychoanalysis, etc). The German historian of sociology; George Simmel (1989c [1892]) and Herbert Spencer (1996, [1879], p. 105) continued to highlight the moral and ethical stances of scientific psychology, whilst also developing a model to explain (1) why people have feelings and moral obligations, and (2) how particular feelings and morals are impressed upon people by the social world. It was at this time that pragmatic concepts started to emerge, which had links with the roots of the grounded theory method. According to Hammersley (1989) grounded theory was pragmatic in that it gave no indication of the relationship

between different positions associated with qualitative-research approaches. Furthermore, it does not deal with the fundamental that social phenomena cannot be understood without taking account of subjective as well as objective factors, and at the times had no way of capturing subjective factors that meets the requirements of science. Hammersley (1989) therefore claimed that grounded theory's roots originated from the concept of 'symbolic interactionism', proposed by Blumer in 1937. In the evolutionary development of grounded theory, the work of Cooley (1864-1929) and George Herbert Mead (1863-1931) was predominant and challenged the explanation behind the polarities of psychology and sociology. Aiming to avoid the controversy of psychologism and sociologism, Cooley (1922) coined the term of the '*looking glass self*'. The notion behind Cooley's label of the looking glass self was that there could be no distinction between individual and social groups because a person's self identity develops out of their relationship with others and that in other people, our self is mirrored. Mead (1934) suggested that the greatest aspect of human conduct relates to symbolism, mainly language. Although Mead (1934) did not propose a theory of language (unlike Chomsky, 1964) he did suggest that language is used to provide rules of how we put ourselves in the position of others (Blumer, 1969). According to Mead individuals behave in a way that requires reflexive interaction. He suggests that ultimately people will expand to individual cues, objects and other people, based on their own individual understanding and meaning of an event or circumstance. These meanings will then evolve from social interactions, which are symbolic as they rely on some form of communication (e.g. language, gestures and objects). According to Mead (1934) and Schwandt (1994), meanings are adapted, adjusted and regrouped to account for changing situations. It is from this viewpoint that people construct what they see as



social reality and how events, objects and experiences aid in the contribution and construction of this reality (Baker, Wuest & Stern, 1992). Hammersley (1989) states these types of social interaction create meaning and the shaping of society via shared meaning, which predominate over the effects of society on individuals. However, in 1956, Blumer added to his original sociality theory, suggesting that the concepts are part of the theory on social interactionism. Social interactionism has been linked to the work of Max Weber, a German theorist in the late 1800s, who claimed that in society meanings are not inherent, but instead created through interaction. Blumer (1956) went on to add that social interactionism is linked to naturalist inquiry and therefore 'sensitising rather than definitive' and that they gain their significance from patterned relationships and not quantifiable correlations. Following the work of Blumer (1937, 1956), it was noted by Hammersley (1989) that Blumer's concepts had parallels with the grounded theory in that both involve making comparisons based on individual cases where information of meaning are continually revised to show relationships as they develop. According to Hammersley (1989), these concepts are based on symbolic interactionism and the grounded theory as they are both related to the development around the point of investigation that are processed by the continuation of comparisons.

The discussion in this section has highlighted the importance of psychology; its links with other disciplines within social sciences (in particular sociology) and the valuable role it has to play in qualitative research methods (in particular grounded theory). The grounded theory approach, which was the chosen methods used for analysing the data for the present investigation will now be explained.

## **5.4 USING THE MODIFIED GROUNDED THEORY APPROACH**

As detailed previously, the qualitative method of grounded theory method was originally developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Although both Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss were both sociologists they came from opposing backgrounds with different philosophical positions to research. Glaser had been trained in quantitative research methods. Glaser was influenced by the work of Lazarsfield who was acknowledged as an innovator in quantitative research (Glaser, 1998; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Glaser then also went on to be trained by Merton who had foundations in theory construction, in particular theoretical coding (Glaser, 1998). In contrast, Strauss on the other hand was strongly influenced by the pragmatist philosophical tradition, which was associated with the work of Herbert Blumer and his notion of symbolic interactionism. Although both theorists came from distinct backgrounds in research, they started working together in the early 1960s, carrying out research on the death and dying of the terminally ill people in hospitals. To do this, they needed to develop a method that was specific to social phenomena, but grounded in data. The research collaboration led to the generation of the constant-comparative method, which later became known as the grounded theory.

The classical idea of grounded theory implies the systematic generation of theory from data that uses an inductive approach to generating theory. According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), the idea behind grounded theory is to form hypotheses based on conceptual ideas. These conceptual ideas then generate categories, which then help in evolving theory to explain the phenomena under investigation. According to Glaser (1967) the original grounded theory method is multivariate in that it is ‘sequentially, subsequently, simultaneous, serendipitously and scheduled’. To illustrate

Glaser's (1998) position, an explanation covering the processes involved in the original grounded theory method will now be given.

Data for use with the grounded theory method are collected mainly via interviews, observations and memo writing. In the original text of Glaser and Strauss (1967), they described two levels of coding. The first is 'substantive coding' (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), which later became termed 'open coding' (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This involves transcribing the interview(s) to conceptualise codes. Any memo writings or field notes are also used to assist in conceptualising these codes. As more data are collected and coding has taken place, new concepts will start to emerge, which eventually will be renamed and modified as theory is generated. This process requires researchers to make comparisons and focus on the data in a conceptually abstract approach, refitting categories to best fit emerging frameworks. The second type of coding is 'theoretical coding' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), which has later become known as 'selective coding' (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This process requires examining the data collected to refit and refine categories to identify what the core variable(s) are to explain the overall research question(s). According to Glaser (1978) these two processes allow for a model to be constructed around a predetermined framework.

Based on the original grounded theory method, these theoretical codes are integrated into the model as they help weave the fractured concepts into the hypotheses that work together to explain the main aspects of the research. According to Glaser (1998), writing memos or field notes are especially important as they represent the 'core stage of the grounded theory methodology'. It is these memo writings that Glaser & Strauss (1967) claim are extremely important when allowing the relationships to

emerge from the coding, collecting and analysing of the data. Glaser (1998) claims that grounded theory is a realistic, inductive technique which allows for the generation of theory through the collection and analysing of data which is rich in methodological content. However, Glaser (1998) provides the following strict guidelines, which he suggests must be adhered to in order to formulate claims when using the grounded theory method.

#### **No previous literature review**

According to Glaser (1967; 1998) researchers using grounded theory should have no pre-conceived ideas about the area they are investigating. Glaser (1998, p 67) claims “Grounded theory’s very strong dicta are a) do not do a literature review in the substantive area and related area where research is done, and b) when the grounded theory is nearly completed during sorting and writing up, then the literature search in the substantive area can be accomplished and woven into the theory as more data for constant comparison”.

#### **No analogue or digital recordings**

According to Glaser (1998) the use of recordings is unnecessary in that they deter from gathering important concepts and patterns from within the interviews. He claims that for conceptualising purposes words from recordings are not important in that the researcher should rely on field notes taken during interviews to generate concepts that are unique to the data collected.

#### **No discussion of research collection and findings**

Glaser (1998) suggests that researchers should refrain from discussing the findings of data collection until theory has been developed and written up. He suggests that discussing the research findings before the write up is complete not only diminishes

motivational drive to write memos, but allows for the researcher to be swayed based on other people's judgements.

Although a comprehensive account has been given describing Glaser and Strauss (1967) original template and Glaser's (1992) stipulations to the grounded theory method, modifications and new approaches to the grounded theory have been introduced over the last forty years.

Grounded theory has been criticised for not being culturally sensitive to populations (Morse, 2000); however, this popular qualitative method has been used extensively and received much attention. Since the grounded theory was initially developed in 1967 by Glaser and Strauss, it has diversified and various adaptations have followed (Chenitz & Swanson, 1986; Keddy, Sims & Stern, 1996; Schatzman, 1991 &). However, it has been claimed that the most important differences exist between Glaser and Strauss themselves - the founders of the grounded theory. According to Stern (1994), the differences between Glaser and Strauss had not been so apparent in conferences and editorials; however, Stern (1994) claims that it was only when the detailed guidance by Strauss (1987) alone, and later by Strauss and Corbin (1990) was published that only one difference was recognised.

It could be seen that Strauss and Corbin (1990) were the first to lay down the gauntlet with the revised version of the grounded theory method in their publication entitled *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory, Procedures and Techniques*. Although there were some differences concerning the style and terminology of the grounded theory method, the main emphasis was on how Strauss and Corbin (1990) had reworked the method to incorporate a rigorous and complex process of systematic coding. There was an outcry from Glaser though, who

vociferously documented his objections and criticisms stating that the rendition of Strauss and Corbin (1990) omitted up to 90% of the original ideas of the original grounded theory method. Glaser (1990) claims that Strauss and Corbin (1990) had modified the description of grounded theory so much that it eliminated the original concept of emergence to a densely operational coding system (Stern, 1994). Glaser (1992) furthermore objected to the new Straussian approach being termed the ‘grounded theory’ and labelled it as no more than a ‘full conceptual description’. Although the authors were unable to reach a diacritical juncture based on the aims, principles and procedures associated with how the grounded theory should be analysed, Strauss and Corbin (1998) have not been deterred from providing an account of their methodological approach to creating grounded theory.

Although Strauss and Corbin’s modified version of grounded theory is in some respects similar to that of the original grounded theory method, they have advocated changes that move away from the ‘pure’ and ‘objectivist’ approach (which has been consistently reinforced by Glaser [1978; 1992; 1998; 2001], to instead use a ‘pragmatic’ and ‘objectivist’ approach.

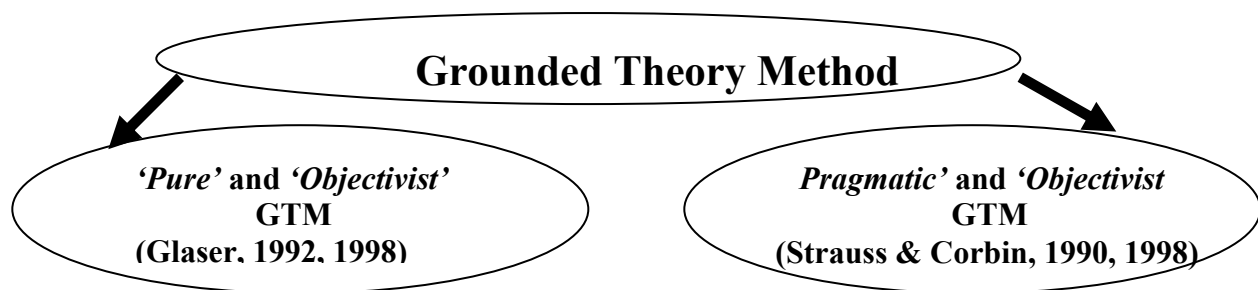


Figure 8. Principle strands of grounded theory method (Harwood, 2002)

Strauss and Corbin (1990) advocate that there are four stages to their revised grounded-theory method: selecting the research question, gathering data, data coding and validating the story line.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) claim that to assist in using grounded theory a literature review is necessary to formulate the initial research questions as it helps identify gaps in knowledge on the topic area. However, they in no way promote that a literature review should be used to form pre-conceived theory (as ridiculed for example by Glaser, 1998), but instead use previous knowledge and research to ‘elaborate or extend upon existing theory’ where appropriate (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.12). In addition, they suggest in the second stage of their grounded theory method that, when gathering data, researchers should be encouraged to use a mixture of qualitative and quantitative research methods in order to ensure all avenues of important data are collected, which assists in the overall aim of generating theory, through data collection and systematic data analyses. This is another aspect to Strauss and Corbin’s (1990) revised grounded-theory method, which does not follow the conventional form of building theory in that the original grounded theory method employed mainly qualitative methods. However, the largest documentary objections from Glaser (1998) to the revised version of grounded theory came from how data were coded and theory generated.

Although in the original grounded theory method Glaser & Strauss (1967) proposed only two stages to coding, Strauss and Corbin (1990) have extended upon this to suggest that the following three stages of analysis occur when coding.

*Stage 1: Open coding.* Data are collected and relevant categories are identified;

*Stage 2: Axial coding.* Initial categories are refined and developed upon further in order to show how they are related and/or interconnected;

*Stage 3: Selective coding.* The core or central category is identified to tell a story of how each of the categories are linked and relevant to one another.

It is only when this systematic coding procedure has occurred that the fourth stage of Strauss and Corbin's (1990) grounded theory method can take place: validating the story line. This final stage is where there is a flow from the selective coding phase, which requires the researchers to validate all relationships in the model as a means of further testing the generated aims or hypotheses. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), this final stage allows the 'story line' of the phenomenon to be developed by providing a focused narrative account of the central categories, which is related to the environment where the data were collected and the previous literature that is pertinent to the investigation. Any memos taken during the interview process are also used at this stage and throughout the coding stages to ensure theoretical sensitivity takes place (i.e. grasping the main behaviours or instances and relating them to substantive categories that have been developed during coding). Although there is often some difficulty in determining when theory has actually been reached, Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss and Corbin (1990) all agree that theory is developed once saturation has been reached and where no new findings are emerging from the data collected. Another aspect of the grounded theory method in which all theorists agree upon is the need to compare and contrast the findings from the data as coding is taking place and as theory is being developed. However, this partial agreement concerning the grounded theory method has in no way prevented venomous insults and critiques of Strauss and Corbin's (1990) grounded theory method by Glaser (1992, 1998, 2002) and his followers (Chenitz & Swanson, 1986; Glaser, 1992; Keddy, Schatzman, 1991; Sims & Stern, 1996; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) who appear to agree with claims that the 'Straussian school of theorists represent an erosion of grounded theory and that they are responsible for giving the impression that the Grounded Theory Method is simply a



qualitative approach, which quantifies findings' (Stern, 1994). However, others have supported the use of the revised version of grounded theory, especially because it incorporates techniques that rely upon a symbolic-interactionism perspective to research (Bryant, 2002; Charmaz, 2000; 2002, 2006; Clark, 2003, 2005; Seale, 1999).

Although it would seem that the grounded theory method has been split into two camps since the quarrel between the main theorists and the subtle, but distinct differences in perceptions of the method, it seems appropriate to select Strauss and Corbin's (1990) version of the grounded theory as it is the most apt for the present research. This is mainly as Strauss and Corbin's (1990) grounded theory method uses a qualitative approach that allows for rich and subjective data to be collected to generate theory (Hussy & Hussy, 1997). Strauss and Corbin (1990) also permit the use of previous knowledge and literature to be used when collecting data to generate theory. In the case of the present investigation it would have been impossible to conduct this research 'blind' due to the author of this thesis previous role as a SRE consultant and the knowledge gained through conducting previous research. Although Rennie, Phillips, and Quartaro (1988) support Glaser's (1998) suggestion not to have any preconceived ideas of the research area Goldkuhl and Cronholm (2003) support Strauss & Corbin's (1990) in that new knowledge needs to be built upon existing knowledge and theory in order to avoid non-cumulative theory development. Furthermore, Strauss and Corbin (1990) do not forbid the use of technology and digital recordings to allow for transcriptions to be made. Although the thought of conducting interviews without a taped recording seems a daunting prospect from the purpose of missing important information from the interview it is also not recommended as

transcriptions serve the purpose of being able to revisit data and re-code text as more evidence emerges and patterns are detected (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Although there were many practical reasons for employing Strauss and Corbin's (1990) grounded theory for the present research, there were also qualitative reasons for choosing this methodology that corresponded with meeting the aims of the investigation. Initially it was the purpose to use a qualitative method that was subjective, rich in properties that developed theory and one that used a combined inductive and deductive approach. Although it has been well documented and accepted that the original grounded theory employs an inductive approach (Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to research because it relies on generating concepts that are abstract in nature and reliant upon times, places, people and events, Strauss and Corbin (1990, p.136) also propose that their grounded theory method incorporated a deductive aspect into research. They claim that although statements and/or relationships emerge from the data researchers are to some extent interpreting their data based on previous knowledge and read literature. Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest that this interpretation to develop categories and to code further relies on deduction since researchers are deducing what the data are saying based on the researchers assumption of life experience and the information they carry in our minds. Strauss and Corbin (1990, p.137) therefore suggest that there is interplay between induction and deduction in the case of their grounded theory method, just as they believe there is in all sciences. That is not to say that researchers should impose interpretations on the data, but instead recognise the human element for the possibility that meaning can be distorted, which is why they recommend using a constant-comparison method to validate data further. A final reason for employing Strauss and Corbin's (1990)

grounded theory method is that it applies and succeeds the initial argument stated by Hammersley (1989) regarding symbolic interaction and the relevance of the grounded theory approach in psychology. Given the advantages Strauss and Corbin's (1990) grounded-theory method discussed in this section, this is the chosen method for the present investigation. It is therefore the intention to reach the desired aims of the research as presented in Table 3.

Table 3

*Application of Strauss and Corbin (1990)*

| Aim   | Using  | Achieved  |
|---|--|---|
| Identify the potential facilitators and barriers within families to discussing SRE.   | Collect data and use a systematic approach to grounded theory by employing constant-comparative method.  | Open, Axial and Selective coding and reinforced with memo writings.   |
| Explore the interpersonal communication between parents and their children when discussing aspects of SRE with the use of a sex education multimedia program. | Using a systematic approach to the grounded theory employing the constant-comparative method.  | Open, Selective coding and reinforced with memo writings.   |
| Explore the effect of the multimedia program on the knowledge and understanding of SRE of parents and their children.   | Use data collected from family interviews and the sexual-knowledge questionnaire to identify family members' knowledge and understanding of SRE before and after using the intervention. | Comparisons of correct scores at the first, second and follow-up stages of data collection.                               |
| Establishing an effective SRE communication model for families.   | Using the data derived from grounded theory along with memo writings to interweave the main characteristics that have been collected throughout data collection.                         | All findings from the research used to develop a model that can help facilitate SRE communications in the family context. |

The process detailed in Table 3 offers an account of when and how grounded theory has been applied to the present investigation. This process was adhered to until saturation had been reached and no new findings emerged.

## **5.5 APPLYING STRAUSS AND CORBIN'S MODIFIED GROUNDED THEORY APPROACH**

Central to grounded theory research is the development or generation of a theory that relates closely to a situation or context where the phenomenon is being studied (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). The phenomenon in this was communication, related to SRE and the context or situation was the family environment where the data was collected. The qualitative data for the present investigation were gained by exploring individual cases/families employing the following process.

### *5.5.1 DATA COLLECTION AND DATA-ANALYSIS PROCESS*

Data collection started by interviewing two families independently. Semi-structured open-ended interviews were used, employing Strauss and Corbin's (1990) grounded theory method. The open-ended questions used were based on previous literature and the researchers' knowledge of SRE and communication in families. The questions that were generated fell under five main headings: (1) SRE taught to adolescents, (2) SRE taught to parents, (3) parental communication of SRE with their children, (4) the Medias impact on SRE within families and (5) the impact of a multimedia program on barriers to discussing SRE. The questions under these five proposed headings formed the basis for initial codes, categories and concepts to be developed, which assisted in the aim of developing theory as subsequent data were collected. Using Strauss and Corbin's (1990) grounded theory method, codes and categories were developed to assist in labelling and distinguishing between emergent concepts that came directly from the data when using a constant-comparative approach. Authenticity of these

codes, categories and concepts were enhanced by generating explicit markers (also known as ‘in vivo’ codes). These explicit markers acted as pinpoints, but essentially they were gaps in the research which needed to be explored further in subsequent interviews as a means of gaining clarity of the information that was given by parents and children and to decide what further data were needed to generate theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998a, p. 105). Defining explicit markers or in vivo codes in this way is an important part of grounded theory and is referred to as ‘selective coding’ (Strauss & Corbin, 1998a, pp. 201-215). Although selective coding is an important aspect of grounded theory, the different phases of the data collection and analysis are important for generating theory.

#### *5.5.2 DATA ANALYSIS, PHASE ONE: OPEN CODING*

Strauss and Corbin (1998a, pp. 101-105) define open coding as “the analytical process through which concepts are identified and dimensions are discovered in the data”. Open coding was used to identify and label main concepts through scrutinising the data collected by reading each interview in a line-by-line and paragraph-by-paragraph fashion. The purpose of open coding was to look at and code any data that were potentially relevant to the investigation by fracturing the data into meaningful elements. Once the meaningful elements had been identified the researcher was then in a position to classify the data in terms of categories, sub-categories and the dimensions of these, depending on what the data was revealing (Strauss & Corbin, 1998 p.123). It was also important at this stage to generate memos to ask ‘What is going on in the data that has been collected?’ Strauss and Corbin (1998) illustrated this further to demonstrate the link between conceptualising, categorising and developing properties based on the data when using their grounded-theory method (Figure 9).

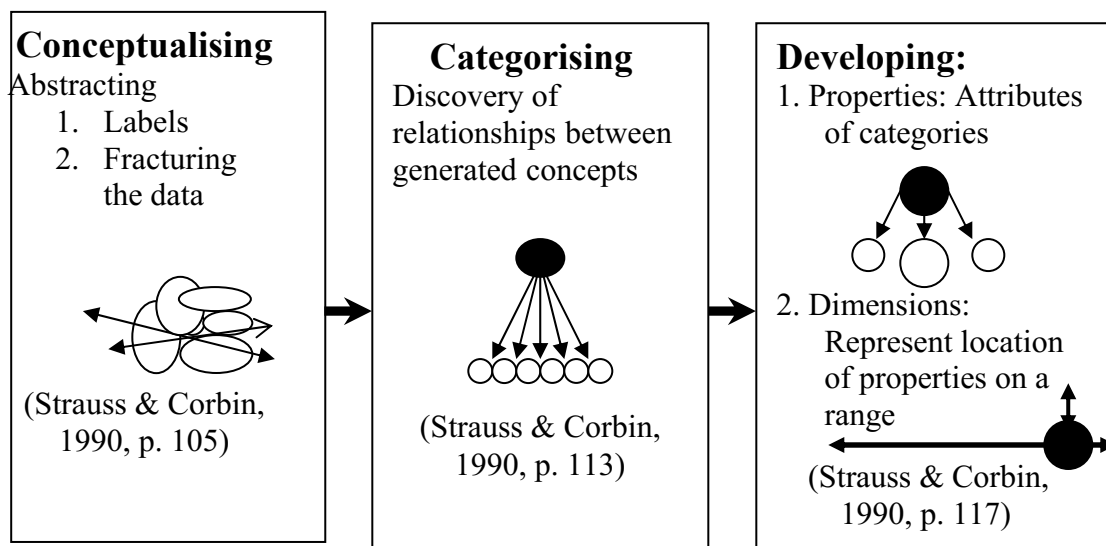


Figure 9. Open-coding sequence (Strauss & Corbin, 1990)

Although Strauss and Corbin (1990) propose three main coding phases, which imply a linear process, the actual method proposes something quite different in that several processes occur at the same time (Stern, 1990). This is especially the case between *Phase One – Open Coding* and *Phase Two – Axial Coding*. According to Strauss & Corbin (1998a, pp. 101-105), open coding seeds axial coding.

### 5.5.3 DATA ANALYSIS, PHASE TWO : AXIAL CODING

As already explained, in open coding data are labelled and categories, sub-categories and dimensions are developed. However, the purpose of axial coding is to now discover and describe the relationships between the categories and sub-categories further. It has been suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1998a p. 123) that axial coding represents the early stages of the model development and therefore identifying links between categories and sub-categories is an important process as it provides the scope for further lines of inquiry to the investigatory process of the grounded-theory method to allow for a model to emerge.

According to Strauss and Corbin (1998a, p. 124), categories represent phenomena, which are based on the participants' views and the aspects they identify as important to

them. In contrast, sub-categories provide the basis of asking further questions about the central phenomena mainly, when, where, why, who and with what consequence (i.e. ‘What happened?’). Strauss and Corbin (1998a, p. 125) claim that sub-categories give original concepts greater explanatory power even though the linking of categories and sub-categories is achieved at a conceptual level, and not a descriptive one. The axial coding process is presented in Table 4.

Table 4

*Axial-coding process (Strauss & Corbin, 1990)*

---

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | Arrange the properties of a category, sub-category and their dimensions (process starts in open coding)  |
| 2 | Based on the phenomenon identify the different causal conditions, intervening conditions, contextual conditions, actions/interactions and potential consequences |
| 3 | Use statements to show how categories and sub-categories are linked or related to one another  |
| 4 | Search for cues in the data to signify how the major categories may be linked or related to one another  |

---

Note. Reproduced from Strauss and Corbin’s (1998a, p.127)

Strauss and Corbin (1998a, p. 127) distinguish between the ‘*process*’ and ‘*structure*’ of axial coding. They claim that although the structure is concerned with the conditions under the phenomenon and the process are related to how the researcher interacts and responds to the data collected, neither can be viewed as separate entities. Instead they claim the ‘structure and process are inextricably linked’ and therefore to understand how they are linked or related, both need to be studied collectively. In the current study, once categories had been systematically developed and linked with other categories (i.e. subcategories) the major categories were linked into the larger scheme of the analysis.

#### 5.5.4 DATA ANALYSIS, PHASE THREE: SELECTIVE CODING

In essence, 'selective coding' is the crux to generating theory in the current study by integrating and refining categories. It was at this stage that the researcher looked at the relationships between core categories and other categories to identify the overarching model that was emerging. Further rounds of data and analysis were needed to confirm and/or deny particular findings that had emerged from previous data. However, at the later stages of selective coding, a model started to emerge. Once the systematic coding procedure of Strauss and Corbin's (1990) grounded theory method had been followed and a model had emerged it was important to validate the story line.

#### 5.5.5 DATA ANALYSIS, PHASE FOUR: VALIDATING THE STORY LINE

As a means of providing a detailed account of the phenomenon, a narrative account of how the concepts, initial categories (i.e. general categories, subcategories and their dimensions) and main categories were derived was generated. This also described how the memos and previous literature were integrated into the investigation to provide a model based on the potential barriers and facilitators within families to discussing SRE matters. However, there were some methodological issues associated with this investigation when using the grounded-theory approach, which need to be considered.

### 5.6 METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH THIS INVESTIGATION

This study explicitly addresses *family* and the *sexual communication* shared within families. However, what is a family? Defining what the norm is for a family is almost virtually, if not pragmatic, especially because so many facets exist to describe and demonstrate the true nature of a family. This was addressed recently in the *Reith Lecture 2009: Citizenship Today* who discussed morality within families. Experts discussed 'morality as a whole system of beliefs' and that since the 1970s morality has



changed because of the UK becoming a pluralistic society. It is therefore accepted that even though political, cultural and religious forces may try and impose certain norms and beliefs upon individuals, families and communities, each group will behave in different ways and have different beliefs about what is morally correct. There are also social aspects which can impact upon what, and how a family is constructed, especially when considering factors such as socio-economic status and education. Although it is not the aim of this thesis to define what a family actually is, it is important to consider in combination the psychological and sociological factors, which allow for SRE to be discussed easily or with difficulty within families. However, consideration needs to be given to the various family networks and characteristics that are displayed within interviews with families based on the different family dynamics, which are unique to each family.

Further considerations also need to be given as to what good quality sex education is. It may be that the sex education given to adolescents or parents previously was not necessarily adequate according to the standards set by government legislation, but instead adolescents and/or parents may have had different rates of learning and were unable to understand information at the particular developmental period when they were given this information. This illustrates the high-quality sex education is also hard to define under normal terms in that what might be enough or high-quality SRE for one person, may lack these qualities for another individual. However, it is important to identify what was or is lacking in order to understand how families discuss SRE, based on what their children are learning and discussing in their adolescent years. As a way of capturing many of these aspects, a qualitative research

method was chosen to analyse the data. This method was grounded theory, which was used to analyse the data for the present investigation.

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## **CHAPTER 6**

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### **METHOD**

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## **6.1 OVERVIEW**

In this Chapter a detailed account is presented relating to the data needed to explore the psychosocial aspects of SRE within families. Within the method section a separate account is provided to: (1) introduce each of the different families and their individual style of how they discuss sexual matters; (2) provide a qualitative explanation of the method used relating to theory development and (3) include the method relating to the intervention used to assess knowledge and how this impacted upon sexual communications within families.

## **6.2 STUDY 1 – CASE STUDY OF PARTICIPATING FAMILIES**

### *6.2.1 DESIGN*

A case study design was used to give an overview and enlighten the reader of how each of the families discussed sexual matters. This information was deduced from the demographic data that was provided by each participant detailing information on where they lived, age, occupation, education and other aspects of information relating to criteria relevant to this study (appendix 2 and 3 respectively). Information for the case study design also used information from the field notes (appendix 15 and 16 respectively) and verbal and non-verbal observational analysis that were carried out when collecting data from each family.

### *6.2.2 PARTICIPANTS*

An opportunity sample of parents and their children was used from the boroughs of Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland in the UK. Families were recruited by word-of-mouth and by placing an advertisement in local libraries, sporting venues and shops (see Appendix 11). With those families who volunteered to take part in the research, times and dates were scheduled that were convenient for family members to welcome

the researcher in their homes. The interviews adopted standardised safety protocols when collecting data from families who resided in the boroughs of Middlesbrough, and Redcar and Cleveland.

No participants reported having any learning disabilities (such as dyslexia), and all spoke English as their native language. The participants' details are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

*Demographic details of all families*

| Participant details  | Interviews 1-10                      | Interviews 11-20                     |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Mother present       | 10 (71%)                             | 10 (83%)                             |
| Father present       | 4 (29%)                              | 2 (17%)                              |
| Male children        | 7(53%)                               | 9 (69%)                              |
| Female children      | 6 (37%)                              | 4 (31%)                              |
| Mother's age range   | 36-44 years<br>(mean=39.40, SD=2.91) | 34-51 years<br>(mean=40.30, SD=5.70) |
| Father's age range   | 43-47 years<br>(mean=45.25, SD=1.71) | 34-45 years<br>(mean=36, SD=2.83)    |
| Son's age range      | 11-15 years<br>(mean=13.43, SD=1.62) | 12-16 years<br>(mean=14, SD=1.96)    |
| Daughter's age range | 12-15 years<br>(mean=13.57, SD=1.29) | 13-15 years<br>(mean=14.25, SD=0.96) |

### 6.2.3 INSTRUMENTATION

Before any research was conducted to collect data from Interviews 1-10 and 11-20 all the materials were piloted. The process in Interviews 11-20 mirrored the exact procedures of Interviews 1-10, except that the data were collected from parents' and their children separately in Interviews 11-20. Any changes or recommendations were discussed with the supervisors of this thesis and adaptations were made where appropriate before conducting any further interviews and collecting data.

#### *6.2.3.1 CONSENT FORM*

A standard consent form was used detailing the aim of the study, the researcher's details and issues concerning confidentiality in line with the ethics requirements of the School of Social Sciences and Law, Teesside University (see Appendix 1). A demographic questionnaire was used to collect participants' personal details along with their views in relation to the sex education they had received and how they had learnt about sex and sex-related issues.

#### *6.2.3.2 DEMOGRAPHIC FORM*

The demographic questionnaire differed for parents and adolescents (see Appendixes 2 and 3, respectively). This questionnaire was essential for collecting data that were related to the intervention and subsequent quantitative analyses.

#### *6.2.4 PROCEDURES*

Before any data were collected from the families who participated in this research, informed consent was sought and appropriate written confirmation was obtained. A copy of the signed consent form was also given to the individual families with the researcher's details in case they wished to have their data withdrawn at a later time. Parents and their children were also asked to complete the demographic questionnaire. On average, this procedure took 10 to 15 minutes. The information collected from the demographic form was used to inform the case studies of each family who participated in the research.

#### *6.2.5 METHOD OF ANALYSIS*

To construct each of the case studies, selected information most relevant to the aims of the study were taken from the demographic questionnaire. The criterion for this information was based on information given in the design of this study. In addition,

important verbal and non-verbal communications were used to give awareness of participants' mannerisms and responses to the open-ended questions asked throughout the interview process. Joint production of both verbal and non-verbal cues were important as they gave meaning to the information that was being conveyed (Mishler, 1986). Studying participants' behaviour through observational analysis also allowed for disclosure of their experiences, behaviour and feelings (McCracken, 1988). Listening attentively and using paraphrasing techniques allowed for an accurate account of how each family discussed sexual matters.

### **6.3 STUDY 2—GROUNDED THEORY ANALYSIS FROM INTERVIEWS 1-20**

#### *6.3.1 DESIGN*

The second element of the research used the grounded theory to explore how families discussed sexual matters prior to using the intervention. However, overall a mixed-method design was employed as findings relating to the intervention were used to inform theory as a means of using the grounded theory method.

#### *6.3.2 PARTICIPANTS*

A detailed description was given in Section 6.2.2, which related to how participants were recruited. Also given in this section is a description of where participants resided and the protocols which were employed for collecting the research.

#### *6.3.3 INSTRUMENTATION*

As already detailed in Section 6.2.3 all materials were piloted prior to data collection. This also included the questions used in the semi-structured interviews. Any changes or recommendations based on the questions used for the semi-structured interviews were discussed with the supervisors of this thesis and adaptations were made where appropriate before conducting any further interviews and collecting data.



#### *6.3.3.1 CONSENT FORM*

A standard consent form was used for all aspects of this study. Details of this can be seen in Section 6.2.3.1 and a copy of the consent form can be seen in appendix 1.

#### *6.3.3.2 DEMOGRAPHIC FORM*

The demographic form was the same as used in Study 1 (Section 6.2.3.2).

#### *6.3.3.3 INTERVIEW QUESTION FORMAT*

To explore and identify the psychosocial aspects concerned with SRE-communication between parents and their children, a standard set of interview questions were used to gather data from the families who participated in this research. The proforma presented in Appendix 4 details the initial questions that were asked to parents and their children. These questions were based on previous research findings concerned with SRE and communication with families, as reviewed in Chapter 3. The categories of the questions to be asked were as follows.

- SRE taught to adolescents
- SRE taught to parents
- Parental communication of SRE with their children
- The media impact on SRE within the family
- The impact of the sex-education multimedia program on reducing barriers for discussing SRE.

Although the proforma presented in Appendix 4 details the initial questions asked to the first 10 families, the questions in the different categories were amended and extended upon to discover more as new findings emerged from each family interview. Any additional questions that were asked as data were collected can be seen in Appendix 5, which also highlights the progression of the research as the interviews continued. For example, this includes the additional category of ‘religion’ and the

impact this had over the SRE that was taught to adolescents. The proforma in Appendix 6 details the initial questions asked to families 11-20 and Appendix 7 shows the progression of the research as the interviews continued.

#### *6.3.4 PROCEDURES*

As already detailed in Section 6.2.4 informed consent was sought and gained prior to data collection and before completing the demographic form. On completion, the families from Interviews 1-10 were asked a series of semi-structured open-ended questions with all family members present, whereas in Interviews 11-20 family members were asked the same series of semi-structured open-ended questions separately. In-depth interviews were conducted prior to using the intervention, after which participants were given a brief describing the purpose of the research and the family members were thanked for their participation (see Appendix 12 for the verbatim debrief instructions that were given).

Each interview was recorded in order to produce transcriptions. The families' transcripts from all the interviews were anonymised and can be viewed in the appurtenance of this thesis (Sections 2 and 3, respectively). In addition, Appendix 13 shows the process and structure of how the data were analysed for Interviews 1-10 and Appendix 14 shows the details from families in Interviews 11-20. It demonstrates how Phases One (open coding), Two (axial coding) and Three (selective coding) of Strauss and Corbin's (1990) grounded-theory method were employed in the present research. Field notes were also developed to assist with Phase Four of the grounded theory methods – '*model validation*' (see Appendix 15 for the field notes relating to Interviews 1-10 and Appendix 16 for field notes taken from Interviews 11-20). The

results from all interviews are presented in Chapter 7 giving an in-depth description of the aspects that related to the sexual communication model.

#### *6.3.5 METHOD OF ANALYSES*

Semi-structured open-ended questions were used to provide an in-depth account of the potential barriers and facilitators of parents and their children to discussing SRE matters within families. To analyse the data from parents and their children, the qualitative approach of the modified grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) was employed to generate a model of the findings. This required using a constant-comparative approach to code, compare, cluster, label and categorise data, which was used in preparation for further data collection. Coding, recording and continuous assessment of data were then used to show the relationship between categories, which led to the development of the main categories. Although the grounded theory was chosen to generate a model in relation to the aims of this investigation, it also had benefits to the theoretical framework discussed in Chapter 5 because it uses symbolic interaction (Blumer, 1969; Denzin, 1970; Mead, 1934), thus providing an understanding of shared meanings and definitions that developed within families.

### **6.4 STUDY 3 - AN EXPLORATION OF THE FAMILIES' KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION AND VIEWS OF AN EDUCATIONAL MULTIMEDIA PROGRAM**

#### *6.4.1 DESIGN*

The third element of the research used quantitative methods to analyse participants' sexual-knowledge at three different stages of data collection. A different sexual-knowledge questionnaire was distributed at pre-intervention, post-intervention and follow-up stages of data collection. Findings were furthermore integrated into the grounded theory method as a means of exploring participants' views of the impact of

the intervention. Therefore, using a mixed-method approach to identify how families discussed sexual matters.

#### *6.4.2 PARTICIPANTS*

A detailed description was given in Section 6.2.1.2 stating how participants were recruited and the protocols employed. This applies to Section 6.2.3.

#### *6.4.3 INSTRUMENTATION*

As already detailed in Section 6.2.1.4 all materials were piloted prior to data collection. This also included the questions used in the semi-structured interviews and the sexual-knowledge questionnaire used to assess knowledge. Any changes or recommendations based on the questions used for the semi-structured interviews were discussed with the supervisors of this thesis and adaptations were made where appropriate before conducting any further interviews and collecting data.

##### *6.4.4.1 CONSENT FORM*

The standardised consent form was used for all aspects of this study (see appendix 1).

##### *6.4.4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC FORM*

The demographic form was the same as that detailed in Study 1 (Section 6.2.3.2).

##### *6.4.4.3 SEXUAL-KNOWLEDGE QUESTIONNAIRE*

Although the majority of data were collected using an interview process, the intervention was used to assess any change in knowledge and to identify if there were any changes in how parents and their children discussed sexual matters. However, in order to assess the knowledge of parents and their children a sexual-knowledge quiz was administered at three stages of the data collection process. This happened before using the intervention (see Appendix 8 for pre-intervention sexual-knowledge questionnaire), after using the intervention (see Appendix 9 for post-intervention

sexual-knowledge questionnaire) and at a follow-up meeting. The follow-up meeting normally took place a week after the initial interview, after family members had been given the opportunity to use the multimedia program more thoroughly (see Appendix 10 for follow-up sexual-knowledge questionnaire). Although all three questionnaires asked the same questions, using multiple-choice answers, they were presented in a different order at the different stages of data collection. This was to control no carry-over effects when assessing the knowledge of family members. Participants were also asked to rate their confidence (out of 100%) in the correctness of their own answer to each question. Reliability for correctness of knowledge and confidence in knowledge at each stage of data collection was analysed using Cronbach's alpha. It was found that alpha values were higher than 0.70, thereby demonstrating reliability of scores. The actual reliability analysis for the sexual-knowledge questionnaires can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6.

*Reliability analysis of sexual-knowledge questionnaires*

| <i>Measure</i>              | <i>Cronbach's alpha</i> |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Correctiveness of knowledge |                         |
| Pre-intervention            | 0.91                    |
| Post-intervention           | 0.90                    |
| Follow-up                   | 0.88                    |
| Confidence in knowledge     |                         |
| Pre-intervention            | 0.95                    |
| Post-intervention           | 0.99                    |
| Follow-up                   | 0.96                    |

#### 6.4.4.4 MULTIMEDIA PROGRAM: SENSE, SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS

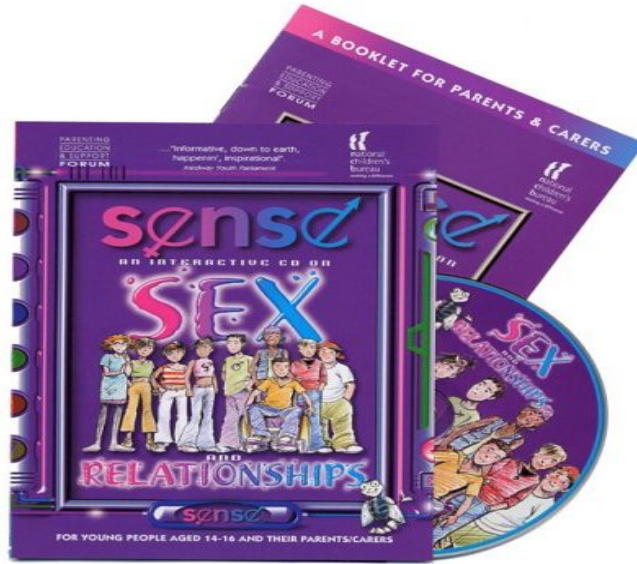


Figure 10 Visual representation of the multimedia program

The multimedia program *Sense, Sex and Relationships* (see 10) was published in 2003 by Sense Interactive CDs and the National Children's Bureau. The contents are in line with the SRE guidance developed by the DfEE in 2000, which recommends what aspects of SRE should be taught at the different key stages within secondary schools. The resource is accompanied by teacher-and parent-manuals to (1) assist schools in delivering effective SRE when using the resource and (2) provide parents with up-to-date knowledge and useful tips on how to discuss sexual matters with their children. Although a verbatim account of the multimedia program can be viewed in the appurtenances (see Insert I) and a copy of the multimedia program is included as part of this thesis, a brief description of the sections will be outlined below.

The first option on the main menu of the multimedia program addresses sexuality and sexual feelings. Included in this section are facts concerning the body in which one can choose either a male or female to find out different aspects associated with puberty. It is quite innovative in that users have to manoeuvre a magnifying glass

over the body and click on the crosses located on the chest and pubic areas of the body. When all crosses have been located, a scale appears to show that all crosses have been selected. This section is cleverly designed in that it is a fun way for boys and girls to know the facts of each gender, and the changes and feelings they are likely to experience during puberty. The second and third sections in the category of sexuality and sexual feelings provide examples on how young people are attracted to each other (whether gay or straight) and includes a section on sexual fantasies. Throughout these sections a noisy fly buzzes in and out of the examples to offer advice and reassurance on how sexual fantasies are normal and how young people should respect each other and themselves when entering into relationships.

The second option on the main menu of the multimedia program addresses relationships. It covers many aspects of relationships, right from beginning to ending a relationship and when to have sex. The main emphasis is on communication and the importance of it when partaking in a relationship. Although the design of the multimedia program is predominantly cartoon-based, this section incorporates real people. It uses both older teenage boys and girls from different cultural background to give examples and advice on how to manage relationships and resist peer pressure. This is similar to the third main category which shows experiences at a sexual-health clinic. The authors have uniquely referred to this as the 'virtual clinic' because it is a computer-assisted environment that gives details of the services that are offered at most sexual-health clinics. This section is brief; however it is informative and useful, especially because it offers the option of printing out the facts so they can be kept for reference.

The fourth main category addresses sex. The sections in this category mainly emphasise how young people can keep themselves safe and details the laws concerning sexual behaviour and sexual abuse. Although this category includes cartoon-based scenarios when talking about sex it gives factual information that is included in the Sexual Offences Act (2003). The fifth main category is possibly the most interactive part of the multimedia program. It resembles a quiz, which is termed 'true or false'. This section challenges users sexual knowledge by asking a series of 33 questions, which are based on the information given throughout the multimedia program. Users have the option to pass on questions if they do not know the correct answer. However, the multimedia program does not give the correct answer if questions are passed upon or responded to incorrectly and therefore users have to refer to the appropriate sections on the multimedia program to find the correct answer for themselves. There is one final main category in the multimedia program, which addresses where people can go for help and advice. As in some of the previous categories that have been mentioned the information in Category Six can be printed out and kept for reference as it provides helpful organisations that young people may need to access.

To complement the multimedia program a booklet is provided, which suggests the best ways for parents to talk to their children about sexual matters. The booklet not only emphasises the importance of parents when discussing these topics with their children, but gives ideas and strategies on how to raise particular subjects and talk openly about sensitive issues, such as sexual activity, being gay and consequences of sexual behaviour. The booklet also gives equal focus to the needs of boys and girls and the important input both mothers and fathers can have when educating and discussing



sexual matters with their children. In addition to these details, the booklet also provides information on useful organisations that are available to help and support parents when talking about sexual affairs with their children. According to Louise Orpin (the Director of Sense Interactive CDs), the multimedia program was developed in order to meet the needs of schools, parents and, more important, young people, as they have a growing desire to learn about sexual issues from computers. The multimedia program therefore allows for formal teaching of sex education at school and less formal ways for parents to teach their children about sexual matters, which is why the resource was chosen for the present research study.

#### *6.4.4 PROCEDURES*

As already detailed in previous aspects of the method section informed consent was obtained prior to data collection. After the demographic form and semi-structured interview had taken place participants were required to take part in the intervention. When all family members had given their views, they were asked to complete the pre-intervention sexual-knowledge questionnaire and explore the sections on the multimedia program (families in Interviews 11-20 viewed the multimedia program separately). After each family had reviewed the chosen sections, they were asked to complete the post-intervention knowledge questionnaire. The families were then requested to explore the multimedia program further over the following week and a time would be arranged for the researcher to return and have a follow-up meeting. Between the week of the initial interview with a particular family and the follow-up interview the researcher would transcribe the interview that had been recorded. The purpose of the follow-up interview was to expand upon each family member's initial opinions and to acquire their further views on the multimedia program. At the end of

the interview process, family members were once again asked to complete the follow-up sexual-knowledge questionnaire to identify if their knowledge had increased since first using the multimedia program at the initial interview. A brief description as to the purpose of the research was given and the family were thanked for their participation (see Appendix 12 for the verbatim debrief instructions that were given).

Although the initial interview with families could take up to two hours depending on the amount of information given, the follow-up interview rarely took more than an hour. It would have been unethical to pay family members for their time, especially considering the sensitive subject that was being discussed. Therefore, the researcher gave each family member a small gift to show her gratitude for their participation, for example a bunch of flowers for the mother and toiletries for the young people. Families were unaware that they were going to be given a gift and were very grateful and happy to have taken part in the research study. This had benefits in that they introduced other families to take part in the research, allowing snowball sampling.

#### *6.4.5 DATA ANALYSIS*

Analysis of Variance was used to analyse the quantitative data from the pre-intervention, post-intervention and follow-up sexual-knowledge questionnaires. Although the sexual-knowledge questionnaire was given to assess participants' knowledge semi-structured open-ended questions were also used to explore participants' views of the impact of the intervention. These findings were also used to complement the findings from the grounded theory analysis.

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## **CHAPTER 7**

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### **RESULTS**

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## 7.1 OVERVIEW

Chapter 7 presents the results from the analyses of both qualitative and quantitative data of this research. These results include descriptive statistics of demographics for parents and their children, a description of each family as well as the grounded-theory analyses, statistical analyses of the sexual-knowledge questionnaire and findings from using the multimedia program.

## 7.2 RESULTS

### 7.2.1 DEMOGRAPHICS

The demographic questionnaire for parents and their children consisted of 40 questions. General questions relating to SRE were asked to support potential findings that may emerge from the grounded-theory analysis (please see Appendixes 17 and 18, respectively for the overall responses from parents).

Table 7

*Demographic details from parents*

| Parents details         | Interviews 1-10 | Interviews 11-20 |
|-------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Marital status          |                 |                  |
| Married                 | 10 (72%)        | 7 (58%)          |
| Single                  | 3 (21%)         | 2 (17%)          |
| Divorced                | 1(7%)           | 3 (25%)          |
| Occupation <sup>a</sup> |                 |                  |
| Manager                 | 3(21%)          | 1 (8%)           |
| Healthcare professional | 3 (21%)         | 2 (17%)          |
| Education               | 1 (7%)          | 2 (17%)          |
| Skilled craft           | 2 (15%)         | 1 (8%)           |
| Administration          | 3 (21%)         | 3 (25%)          |
| Home-maker              | 2 (15%)         | 3 (25%)          |
| Religion                |                 |                  |
| Church of England       | 4 (43%)         | 4 (33%)          |
| Catholic                | 6 (57%)         | 6 (67%)          |
| Age of first child      |                 |                  |
| Age 20-24               | 5 (36%)         | 6 (50%)          |
| Age 25-29               | 6 (43%)         | 2 (17%)          |
| Age 30-34               | 3 (21%)         | 4 (33%)          |

|  |          |           |
|--|----------|-----------|
| Age sex-education was given in school        |          |           |
| Age 11-12                                    | 3 (21%)  | 8 (66%)   |
| Age 13-14                                    | 10 (72%) | 2 (17%)   |
| Age 15-16                                    | 1 (7%)   | 2 (17%)   |
| Discussed SRE matters with their own parents |          |           |
| Yes  | 5 (36%)  |           |
| No   | 9 (64%)  | 12 (100%) |
| Aware of SRE given to their own children     |          |           |
| Yes  | 4 (29%)  | 5 (42%)   |
| No   | 10 (71%) | 7 (58%)   |

<sup>a</sup> Occupational groups/categories are from Census 2000 classification system

Table 7 shows that the majority of parents taking part in Study I and II were married and employed, except for five parents, who were mothers and home-makers. The majority of the parents had Catholic belief systems and had their first child in their twenties (mainly early twenties). Although some parents received sex education when they initially started secondary school, the majority of the mothers did not receive any sex education until they were half way through secondary school when between 13 and 14 years old and fathers did not receive sex education until they were 14 to 15 years old. All of the latter parents were Catholic and went to a Catholic school. On the whole, the majority of parents did not have SRE conversations with their own parents and were not aware of the SRE that was given to their children. Although this demographic information represents parents and their history of the sex education that they received, it was important to identify what SRE was given to their children and who they preferred to talk to, and how they preferred to learn about sexual matters. The views of children can be seen in Table 7 based on the data collected in Appendixes 19 and 20.

Table 8

*Demographic details from children*

| Parents details   | Interviews 1-10 | Interviews 11-20 |
|---|-----------------|------------------|
| Want more sex-education that is provided                              |                 |                  |
| Yes   | 8 (62%)         | 10 (77%)         |
| No  | 5 (38%)         | 3 (23%)          |
| Continued...  |                 |                  |
| Left wanting to know more about sexual topics                         |                 |                  |
| Yes   | 8 (62%)         | 10 (77%)         |
| No  | 5 (38%)         | 3 (23%)          |
| Age at which you wanted sex education to be given                     |                 |                  |
| Age 9-10  | 4 (31%)         | 8 (62%)          |
| Age 11  | 7 (54%)         | 5 (38%)          |
| Age 12  | 2 (15%)         | 0 (0%)           |
| Do you talk to your parents about sexual matters?                     |                 |                  |
| Yes   | 8 (62%)         | 9 (69%)          |
| No  | 5 (38%)         | 4 (31%)          |
| If yes, which parent do you talk to about sexual matters?             |                 |                  |
| Mother  | 5 (63%)         | 7 (78%)          |
| Father  | 0 (0%)          | 1 (11%)          |
| Both  | 3 (37%)         | 1 (11%)          |
| Do you feel embarrassed talking to your parents about sexual matters? |                 |                  |
| Yes   | 7 (54%)         | 8 (62%)          |
| No  | 6 (46%)         | 5 (38%)          |
| Do you talk to your friends about sexual matters?                     |                 |                  |
| Yes   | 13 (100%)       | 13 (100%)        |
| Do you use media sources to learn about sexual matters?               |                 |                  |
| Yes   | 12 (92%)        | 10 (77%)         |
| No  | 1 (8%)          | 3 (23%)          |
| Do you use computers to learn about sexual matters?                   |                 |                  |
| Yes   | 11 (85%)        | 10 (77%)         |
| No  | 2 (15%)         | 3 (23%)          |

Table 8 shows that the majority of young people in Study I and II wanted to be provided with more sex education, especially because 18 of 26 wanted to learn more about the SRE subjects that were taught. All of the young people reported wanting to be given sex education before they reach their teenage years, which was not consistent with when it actually is being taught at the age of 12 to 13. Table 8 also highlights that the majority of young people did talk to their parents about sexual matters, especially their mother.

Although children reported talking to their parents about sexual matters 15 out of the 26 children interviewed did report feeling embarrassed when doing so. The majority of children also reported using computers and the media to learn about sexual issues for themselves and all reported discussing sex topics with their friends. Although the demographic details presented in Table 7 and 8 give a descriptive overview of the factors that are most likely to affect sexual communications within families it is important to understand how each individual family communicated sexual matters. For this reason a brief case study description follows to inform the reader of how sexual issues were discussed and the individual circumstances of each family. The following results are based on the demographic details given by each family and specific examples from the interviews that highlight how sexual matters were discussed within families.

### **7.2.2 STUDY 1 – CASE STUDY OF PARTICIPATING FAMILIES**

The following descriptions describe the style in which families discuss sexual matters. It also includes details from the demographic form to highlight the characteristics of each unique family.

#### **Family 1 – Study I**

Family 1 resided in a small, but pleasant town in the borough of Redcar and Cleveland. The mother was aged 43 and worked part-time as a administrator. She appeared quite passive and less authoritative than the father in the family, who was also aged 43 and worked as a full-time engineer. Although the mother appeared to have an open relationship with their only child, a daughter of 14 the father seemed to take the lead role in addressing and initiating controversial and sensitive issues with their daughter, and within the family. An example of this was in relation to the topic of homosexuality, which he openly admits to being against based on the amount of GLBT sexual



innuendos seen in the media. The mother and father appeared to be very conservative and were keen to instil traditional British family values in the upbringing of their daughter. The father was brought up Catholic and the mother was brought up as Church of England. However, they seemed to agree on the values and morals that they wanted their daughter to be brought up with. Although the daughter appeared to comply with these values, she was also seen to be strong-minded and confident in her own opinions. The daughter attended a local non-faith comprehensive school in the Cleveland area. Throughout her schooling the daughter felt that she had been given adequate sex education at school, but openly admitted asking her parents questions if she was unsure of the facts, or wanted to know more about certain sexual topics. The daughter did not stipulate when these conversations were most likely to take place but the likelihood of sexual conversations with her parents' were increased when spending time together or on an evening when they watched television together as a family.

Although the daughter showed she had respect for her parents she was also confident in expressing her views even if her parents did not agree. An example of this was when disagreeing with her parents that sexual matters were an embarrassing subject to discuss. Although the family claimed to discuss sexual issues openly within their family without embarrassment, this was not the case for the parents when they were younger. Sexual affairs were found to be discussed in the family briefly when parents were younger, but not to the extent that they discussed these with their daughter. Both parents felt that their own parents' were too embarrassed to discuss sexual matters openly in case it encouraged sexual intercourse and other sexually related behaviours at that time. However, the parents' in Study I felt that they wanted to provide better sex education to their daughter and therefore discussed sexual matters with her from a young age and

before it was formally taught at school. The family agreed that sexual issues had been discussed openly from an early age, which allowed for continuous teaching as their daughter was growing up. Although the daughter felt she had a good-level of knowledge regarding sexual matters, the multimedia program was found to raise issues that the family had not discussed previously. For example, the family were sitting close together when exploring the multimedia program. They selected the *'True and False Quiz'*. One of the questions that the daughter was unsure about was whether *'Areola being plants'*. Her mother corrected her, but she was also unsure as to what the withdrawal method was. This was evident when one of the questions was *'A girl can't get pregnant if the boy pulls out before he comes'*. The father corrected her and said *'The girl can get pregnant because he may have already come inside of her if he got excited before he finally ejaculates. This is what they mean by pre cum'*. The daughter listened attentively and did not appear embarrassed when talking to her mum and dad about sexual matters, which suggests that the family had discussed similar issues previously.

## **Family 2 – Study I**

Family 2 resided in a small, but pleasant location in the borough of Redcar and Cleveland. The mother was aged 36 and worked as a full-time district nurse. She had a bubbly personality, which was transferred onto their children and the positive relationship they had. The father was not present at the interview as he worked away in London as a butcher during the week, only returning to the family home on a weekend. The mother therefore took the role of main caregiver for her children. The mother appeared to have a close relationship with all of their three sons, especially the eldest who took part in the interview. The son was aged 12 and was perceived to have a mischievous streak, basically what you would expect from a twelve year old boy.

However, he had an assumed innocence, which made him appear cute even though he wanted to be portrayed as a grown-up male who was outspoken and macho. An example of this was when he was asked how he learnt about sexual matters. He showed a healthy form of curiosity when he recounted an occasion when his father brought home a newspaper that contained the most 50 sexy women who posed nude. The son remembered grabbing the newspaper and running upstairs to his room so he could look at the different shapes and sizes of the naked women. Although this was regarded as a joke within the family the mother was not deterred for her son learning about sex through pornographic material and media sources. However, she was keen to ensure her son knew how to protect himself and therefore they had private conversations relating to sex when the two younger sons in the family had gone to bed. The son showed a lot of respect to his mother and felt she had the knowledge to teach him about sexual matters with her being a nurse. However, the son claimed that he would not speak to his father about sexual matters because he would shout and swear at him, or not give the information the son needed. Consequently, the son perceived his father to “be thick” and “insensitive” to his needs, which acted as a barrier for discussing anything on sexuality. The son however was keen to learn about sexual matters, which was demonstrated by him wanting to keep the multimedia program an extra week after the follow-up meeting. The son mainly explored the multimedia program on his own because his mother did not had time to sit down with him to explore it together. The mother and son did express though how the multimedia program had generated sexual conversations and both thought it was a good resource to learn about sexual topics.

### **Family 3 – Study I**

Family 3 resided in the Middlesbrough area. The mother was aged 36, divorced and worked as a full-time nurse. The mother was a strong Catholic believer and instilled the morals and values upon her children that she was brought up with. She wanted her children to know more about sexual matters than she was taught and was therefore keen to tell them so they were prepared for adult life. Although the daughter was not a Catholic believer she attended a local Catholic school. The daughter was 15 years old and felt the school nurse had taught her the most about sexual matters as well as learning from the conversations she had with her friends. However, she was embarrassed talking to her mother about sexual matters because the mother would ask her personal questions, which the daughter regarded as private. This would normally be in relation to relationships the daughter had. The daughter seemed quite uncomfortable talking about sexual affairs in front of her mother. Consequently, the mother talked a lot and tended to answer questions on behalf of her daughter. The mother appeared controlling and very opinionated, which deterred the daughter from speaking openly and honestly. Even when the mother and daughter sat down to explore the multimedia program the mother was quite abrupt when the daughter asked which section they should explore. The mother then told her to go through the sections in order. As a consequence of the abrupt mannerisms of the mother the daughter viewed the multimedia program on her own between the initial and follow-up interview. The mother did look at the multimedia program on her own and commented on how she had learnt more about sexual clinics and contraception; a subject area she may not have been told much about as she was growing up due to the Catholic ethos. Although the mother and daughter claimed to learning about sexual matters from using the multimedia program it appeared that

throughout the interview the daughter was giving socially desirable answers that mirrored her mother's opinions. Nonetheless, the multimedia program was beneficial in increasing their knowledge even if it did not generate sexual conversations within the family with the mother and daughter exploring the multimedia program separately.

### **Family 4 – Study I**

Family 4 resided in the Middlesbrough area. The mother was aged 36 and was a student nurse. Her husband worked away and therefore she was the main caregiver for their children. Although the daughter spoke favourably of her father it was clear that she had a closer, more trusting relationship with her mother. This was evident by the types of conversations they had and the close proximity they shared whilst taking part in the interview. The mother reported talking about sexual matters with her daughter from when she was three or four years old and when she was pregnant with her second child. The daughter recalls her mother always answering questions that related to sexual issues honestly, which has provided a baseline for their relationship. Although the mother was not religious her husband was brought up in a Catholic family where sexual matters would not have been discussed because his parents were embarrassed. This embarrassment has continued within the family, which deters the daughter from asking him questions as she knows he will become embarrassed and hide behind his newspaper. The mother feels that it is her and the school's responsibility to teach their children about sexual affairs. Nonetheless, she has reservations of the sex education that is provided and therefore talked to her daughter to make sure she knows the facts. The daughter also initiates sexual conversations on sexuality with her mother, which has led to an open, honest and trusting relationship. Although the mother and daughter had talked about sexual matters prior to the interview the mother recalls learning more about

contraception from exploring the multimedia program with her daughter. The daughter also found the multimedia program to be a useful resource, which generated further conversations with her mother especially relating to the opposite sex. Therefore, the multimedia program was found to generate conversations about sexual issues within family 4.

### **Family 5 – Study I**

Family 5 resided in the Middlesbrough area. The mother was aged 40 and was a teaching assistant. She was a single mum who was the main caregiver for her son, aged 12 as the father had no contact with their son. The mother and son lived with the mother's mother (i.e. the grandmother of the son). This was found to sometimes restrict conversations of a sexual nature as she was a strict Catholic believer. The mother and her son did get the opportunity to talk about sexual matters when the grandmother was out of the house or when the mother would take her son to play football. The mother and son appeared to spend a lot of time together through sporting activities however; the son reported feeling embarrassed talking to his mother about sexuality. The son therefore reported talking to his older cousin and his uncle about sexual matters that he had a close relationship with. The son also said that he would feel more comfortable talking to his cousin and uncle because they are of the same gender and will understand more about what he is experiencing. The mother was protective of her son and appeared quite controlling over his behaviour. For example, the son was not allowed to go to the town on his own and the mother always wanted to know where her son was and the people he was associated with. It was clear that the mother adored her son, but was keen for him to remain a boy for as long as possible. The mother tried to instil the Catholic values and morals on him and wanted her son to learn about sexual matters when he was older as he should not be

thinking about this at his age. However, the son knew more about sexual matters than the mother perceived. An example of this was that although the mother had not told her son about contraception, the son knew what condoms were for and this led to a joke with his mother when one was found outside their home. The son joked about it not being his, but instead his grandma's. This shows that the mother and son did talk about sexual issues, even if it only in a joking way, especially relating to the conversation they had when referring to the condom.

### **Family 6 – Study I**

Family 6 resided in the Middlesbrough area. The mother was aged 37 and divorced from the father of their two daughters who took part in the study. They were aged 13 and 16 and appeared to have a close relationship with each other, and their mother. The family, mainly the mother and the eldest daughter claimed to talk openly about sexual issues mainly from when aspects of sex were taught at school or through something they had seen on the television. Although the mother disapproved of some of the sexual scenes shown on watershed television because of the impact it may have on her eight year old daughter she did agree that it did generate sexual communication with her two oldest daughters. The daughters also claimed to talk to each other about their own experiences relating to sexuality to their father or mother's boyfriend about sexual topics. This was mainly because the male figures in their lives would mainly warn them to keep away from boys and would embarrass the daughters when boyfriends would come to see them. The daughters found this embarrassing and as a result deterred them from speaking about sexual matters with their father and soon to be step-father. This embarrassment was found to be manifested when the mother would also ask the daughters questions about the relationships they had with the opposite sex. As a result daughters would feel

embarrassed and conversations of a sexual nature would not occur because they felt their privacy had been invaded with relationships being a private matter.

Although the daughters felt they could talk to their mother about some sexual matters they reported talking to same-sex friends more about various topics relating to sex. This was mainly because they spent more time with their friends than they did with their mother. However, the mother did try and spend time with their daughters on an evening and encouraged them to talk about sexual matters with her. This was mainly because she wanted her daughters to have better sexual knowledge than she was provided with when she was younger since her parents were too embarrassed to discuss sexual issues within the family. Although the mother felt she did not have a role-model to be able to talk about sexual affairs with her daughters, she did report feeling embarrassed talking about some sexual issues because that was the way she was taught by her own parents. The mother was also conscious of the types of conversations she could have with her two eldest daughters and sexuality were restricted until late evening when her youngest child had gone to bed. Although there appeared to be restrictions on discussing sexual matters openly within the family due to family circumstances the multimedia program was found to generate conversations about the opposite sex, a topic that had not been discussed in detail due to it being an all girl family environment. The mother also thought that aspects of the multimedia program could be useful at initiating sexual communications with her youngest daughter and wished that the multimedia program existed when she was younger as she would have learnt more about sexual matters at a time when she needed it the most.



## **Family 7 – Study I**

Family 7 resided in the Middlesbrough area. The mother was aged 37 and was brought up in a Catholic environment. Although she was keen to ensure her 12 year old son was brought up with good values and morals she did not want him to be influenced by religion if it prevented him from not being given the correct information needed to keep himself safe. The mother felt that religion impacted massively on the sexual information she was taught at school because it was a ‘taboo’ subject, even though she felt she could talk to her mother and older sisters about some sexual matters when she was younger. The mother was divorced from their son’s father and consequently, he did not see much of their son therefore, she was the main caregiver within the family. The mother and son appeared to have a close, trusting relationship which allowed them to discuss sexual issues openly within the family. The mother reported talking to their son about sexuality from a young age because he was an inquisitive child who was eager to know the facts. She was also keen to give the correct information when their son asked questions because she wanted him to have better sex education than she received, especially as she felt she was fobbed-off when she was younger which meant she learnt from her friends, other people’s conversations and sometimes family members. The mother and son appeared to have a good, humorous relationship whereby they would take the mick out of each other, but in a respectful and caring manner. This humour appeared to provide a comfortable environment for sexual topics to be approached and initiated by the mother and son. Although the son felt he learnt and initiated conversations of a sexual nature with his mother through watching television the mother felt that the media could be too stereotypical and glamorises sex, which does not reinforce the values she was trying to instil upon their son. She also accepts that her religious background also has implications

on what her son learns when attending a Catholic school. Nonetheless, she and their son agreed that these influences do not affect how they discuss sexual issues because they talk openly it all. This was evident by exploring the multimedia program, which generated conversations around contraception, especially as they had only discussed contraception in relation to boys and not the different forms of contraception that are used by girls.

### **Family 8 – Study I**

Family 8 resided in the Middlesbrough area. The mother was aged 44 and her husband, who was also present, was aged 47. They had four children, two of whom participated in the interview. Their daughter was aged 12 and appeared to adore her mother. The son was 15 and appeared to have an open relationship with both of his parents. Although the mother was brought up in a strict Catholic family never discussing sexual matters, the father was Church of England and was told about these issues by his mother. Both children attended a Catholic school and were not told about certain sexual topics that did not reflect the schools ethos. However, the parents wanted their children to know more about sexual matters than they were taught at school and therefore talked openly to their children, mainly from when they were at a developmental age to understand the facts. Although the parents were brought up with religious influences they felt that religion was less important to younger people, especially as it prevents them from learning the sexual facts to keep themselves safe and prepare them for adult life. Parents were keen to instil good family values and morals upon their children and always gave the correct sexual information along with the emotional support needed to their children. Although it was found that the mother was the main caregiver within the family due to the work commitments of the father, they both felt they had given sexual information to their

children. However, based on the sex education received by the mother she sometimes felt that she did not have the necessary sexual knowledge to provide her children with the information needed. She would however find out the information from her husband or from the Internet to be able to give her children the correct facts. The family appeared to spend a lot of time together but the openness to discuss sexual matters was restricted due to younger siblings. Parents put aside special times where their children could talk to them about sexual affairs in private if they wanted to. Although the whole family felt that television can generate conversations of a sexual nature the mother felt that the media was not always a good thing in that it reinforced negative issues associated with sexuality and therefore puts pressure on young people to conform. The family felt they had talked openly with each other but the daughter preferred to just talk to her mum, whereas the son wanted to talk to both parents so he could learn about sexual matters from both the male and female perspective. This was evident when exploring the multimedia program in that they did watch it as a family, but the daughter preferred to go through the different sections again when she was alone with her mother. The multimedia program was found to generate sexual communications within the family, especially between the mother and daughter as the daughter was less knowledgeable about sexual issues than her older brother.

### **Family 9 – Study I**

Family 9 resided in the Middlesbrough area. The mother was aged 40 and her husband, who was also present, was aged 46. They had two children, one of whom was 13, and who participated in the interview. Right from the beginning of the interview it was evident that the family had joking personalities. They had a rapport that was second to none. This extended in how sexual matters were discussed within the family. However,

the family did talk about sexuality in a serious way when needed even if conversations were initiated from a joking perspective. Although the mother would mainly initiate conversations of a sexual nature with their son when he came home from school the son was keen to learn about sexual issues from his father who he also had a close and trusting relationship with. The whole family environment was like something you would see on The Walton's television programme, especially when the whole family would spend time together at meal times. The family had a ritual in that at the dinner table each person would have to say the thing that made them laugh the most in that given day. This would allow for sexual topics to arise, whereby they were discussed openly. However, further conversations about sex would occur between father and son when in the car on the way back from football. The time spent as a family seemed to allow for sexual issues to occur at ease. Even though the mother was brought up as a strict Catholic and sexual matters were a 'taboo' subject in the father's family, his father would shout 'piffle' every time sex was alluded to. Both parents wanted better sex education for their children than they had received. Although the parents felt it was their responsibility to teach their children about sexual matters, they also felt that the school need to provide the sexual-facts which they can advance upon. The family agreed that school and the media can initiate conversations of a sexual nature but both parents maintained talking to their children about sexuality from a young age in preparation for what their son is likely to experience as a teenager. The multimedia program was furthermore found to initiate sexual communications between the son and both his parents. This was especially so in relation to the scenario on the multimedia program where the father and son were talking in the car because the son and his father could

relate to it as that is when they were likely to have sexual talks on their drive home from football matches.

### **Family 10 – Study I**

Family 10 resided in the Middlesbrough area. The mother was aged 42 and her husband, who was also present, was aged 45. They had four children, two of whom were their 13 and 15 year old sons who participated in the interview. It was evident from the beginning of the interview that the sons did not discuss sexual matters with their parents and that they felt their parents did not have the knowledge to teach them either. The mother would attempt to initiate conversations of a sexual nature by asking their sons questions about their personal relationships. This was construed as an invasion of their privacy and therefore the sons were more reluctant to talk to their parents about sexual matters. The sons were found to mainly learn about sexual matters by talking to their friends as they felt the Catholic school they attended did not give them the sexual information they necessarily needed. The parents were strong Catholic believers based on how they were brought up even though they reported not pushing their beliefs off onto their children. They, mainly the mother, were embarrassed talking about sexual matters because of the way she was brought up. The parents recalled these topics not being discussed openly in their own families when they were younger because it was a ‘taboo’ subject and because their own parents were embarrassed to discuss these openly. Consequently, as with their sons the parents learnt from their friends or overhearing other peoples conversations. Although the sons were embarrassed at the interview they showed total disrespect to their parents by some of the comments they made. The sons would not watch the multimedia program with their parents, but did watch it together. The whole family was complementary towards the multimedia program but through

resistance from the sons it was not found to remove any barriers what-so-ever for discussing sexual matters openly within the family.

### **Family 11 – Study II**

Family 11 lived in the Middlesbrough area. The mother was aged 51 and was a school teacher. She was married to a Pharmacist who was not present at the interview because of playing golf. They had two sons aged 14 and 16 who participated in the interview. The sons appeared delightful young men and were very open and honest throughout the interview. They did claim to being embarrassed talking about sexual issues with their parents because they felt that as teenagers they had more sexual knowledge than their parents. Furthermore, the sons reported that their parents were embarrassed talking about sexuality and this acted as a barrier for conversations to occur. The mother reported that she was embarrassed discussing these affairs with her sons based on the strict Catholic upbringing she had. She also felt that her husband would be far better placed to discussing sexual matters with their sons with being of the same-sex. However, the one time the father tried to approach a conversation of a sexual nature with his eldest son the father and son became embarrassed and the topic has not been approached since. The sons also commented on being dissatisfied with the sex education they had received from the Catholic school they attended. They therefore relied on friends to learn about sexuality, which mirrors how the mother learnt when she was younger. Although the sons appeared to adore their parents and there was a good sense of humour between the mother and their sons sexual matters were not discussed openly within the family. However, the mother and sons thought the multimedia program was a good resource even if it did not serve the purpose of increasing communications within the family. The sons furthermore reported that they felt they had learnt about sexual matters from taking

part in the interview, but they would not have participated if their parents had been present.

## **Family 12 – Study II**

Family 12 lived in the Middlesbrough area. The mother was aged 43 and was a housewife. She was married to a Police Officer who was not present at the interview. They had two children together and the mother had a 13 year old daughter from a previous marriage who participated in the interview. The mother and daughter reported discussing sexual matters openly and that this was because they had a close and trusting relationship. Although the daughter perceived her mother to not have the up-to-date knowledge to teach her about all sexual matters she felt she could talk to her mother about girl experiences and offer reassurance. This situation was the same for the mother but, it was never discussed openly within the family when she was younger because her father would have been too embarrassed. Both the mother and daughter reported that younger siblings restricted the conversations of a sexual nature within the family. Nonetheless, the media did allow for sexual communication to be increased even though the mother thought that some of the material shown in the media was smutty rather than educational. Although the mother and daughter were interviewed separately at the initial interview they chose to explore the multimedia program and answer questions relating to it at the follow-up interview together. It was apparent that they had discussed some sexual issues openly prior to the interview taking place. The multimedia program was also found to increase sexual communication between the mother and daughter as it addressed sexual topics they had not previously discussed.

### **Family 13 – Study II**

Family 13 lived in the Middlesbrough area. The mother was aged 44 and was a housewife. She was married to a Store Manager who was 38 and present at the interview. They had three children and the eldest son aged 13, participated in the interview. They appeared to be a close family and all reported discussing sexual matters openly within the family. However, the son revealed talking more to his mother because she is always at home and because he is closer to her, than his father. Although younger siblings were found to restrict conversations concerning sex occurring in the family, the son would go and talk to his mum when they were in bed whereby they could have private conversations. Although the parents recalled sexual matters not being discussed openly when they were younger they felt that they discuss and are more willing to discuss these with their own children. They felt that the media is a good way of initiating these conversations, which is when they are most likely to communicate sexual issues within their family. Both parents also felt that because their son is quite inquisitive he finds a lot of information out for himself and then asks them questions to get a greater understanding of the topics he has learnt about. The family chose to explore the multimedia program as a family, which indicated they were quite open with each other. Although the son learnt about sexual topics based on using the multimedia program the family felt that it did not increase conversations about sex within the family because they were already open when discussing sexual matters. The family were complimentary about aspects of the multimedia program.

### **Family 14 – Study II**

Family 14 lived in the Middlesbrough area. The mother was aged 34 and was an administrator. She was married to a Bank Manager who was also 34 years old and



present at the interview. They had one son who was aged 14 and who participated in the interview. From the outset it was clear that the family were open and honest with each other. The son was respectful to his parents and they reciprocated this in how they talked back to him. It was also clear that the father and son had a strong bond, mainly because they spent a lot of time together bike riding and enjoying other sporting activities. The mother was close to her son but, felt that her husband and son had a unique relationship, which was precious. Although the mother felt she had the sexual knowledge to teach her son about sexual matters, the father would mainly talk to their son based on what males experience and other sexual topics. This was mostly because the father had been told about sexual matters from a young age by his own parents and sexual issues were discussed openly within his family. In contrast the mother was brought up in a family where sexual matters were not discussed through embarrassment factors. As a consequence she sometimes felt embarrassed discussing sexual matters with their son. Although parents felt they talk openly as a family about sexual issues, they do not invade their son's privacy by asking him personal questions. They, mainly the father, give the sexual facts and both parents instil the values and morals upon him concerning sex and sexual relationships. It was evident that the son did have the knowledge concerning sexual subjects as he felt he had not learnt anything from the multimedia program because he had already been told the information from his father. However, parents felt that the multimedia program could be useful in other families when initiating sexual conversation and in families where children could not talk to their parents.

### **Family 15 – Study II**

Family 15 lived in the Middlesbrough area. The mother was aged 44 and divorced from the father of their three children, two of which were their 12 and 14 year old son's who

participated in the study. The mother was brought up in a strict Catholic family whereby sex was seen as a 'taboo' subject and therefore not discussed. The mother reported wanting better sex education to be given to her children, which is why she has been honest and open in discussing sexual matters with them from a young age. The mother reported that she sent her children to a Catholic school because she wanted them to have the values and morals she had been brought up with. Although she was aware of the sexual topics that would not be taught at school she has ensured her children know pretty much all there is to know from a young age. Although the mother has been responsible for educating her children about sexual issues the sons wished that they could talk to their father about male experiences. Since their father is never around they rely on this information from same-sex friends and each other, but feel their mother has taught them the most due to her being open with them from when they were a young age. The family perceived their own family to be more open than other families when discussing sexuality because the mother has always encouraged conversations of a sexual nature and been prepared to give the correct information. As a family they felt that the media has been a good source for generating sexual issues. This has then prompted further conversations which have allowed the sons to know more about sexual subjects.

### **Family 16 – Study II**

Family 16 lived in the Middlesbrough area. The mother was aged 35 and was single. She was a student with two daughters. The eldest daughter age 15 participated in the study. The mother was brought up in a strict Catholic family whereby sex was seen as a 'taboo' subject and therefore not discussed. Although the mother separated from their children's father when the children were younger she has had very little contact with her own family until recently. This was mainly because of the condemnation of having children

out of wedlock and not conforming to get married. This was made more difficult by her partner and father to her children being afro Caribbean. Although this has not made the mother bitter towards her family she blames their racism and the Catholic religion for the choices her family have made by excluding her children from the family network and for proper sex education not to be given to her when she was younger. Despite the problems of religion that have arose over the years in the family the mother was adamant that her children would be given better sex education that she received. Although the mother admitted she would still have had children she feels that she would have had her children later in life if she had been educated about sexual matters, in particular contraception. Nonetheless, the mother feels she has learnt a lot about the powerful forces of religion and is no longer a Catholic believer. She has therefore ensured her children attend a non-faith school so they can be given proper sex education and claims to openly discussing sexual matters within the family. The mother appeared to have a close, trusting relationship with her eldest daughter, which has extenuated to being open about sexual subjects. The mother and daughter claim that conversations about sexual matters arise through watching television together and through the talking about the relationship her daughter has with her boyfriend. Although the mother and daughter talk openly, there are sometime restrictions when the younger sibling is present. They overcome this by talking when she has gone to bed. The mother seems to be quite liberal in her approach to raising her children in that she wants them to have the values and morals but not be restricted to being anything but themselves. She supports her children in their choices and allows them to have a non-judgment upbringing, which is opposite to how life was for her when she was younger. Although the mother and daughter felt they had discussed most sexual topics the multimedia program conversations of a sexual

nature concerning boys and some of the things they experience. The multimedia program was therefore beneficial in generating sexual conversations even though it did not have the purpose of removing barriers for discussing sexual affairs because they already discussed these openly within the family beforehand.

### **Family 17 – Study II**

Family 17 resided in the Middlesbrough area. The mother was aged 35 and a student/care worker. She was divorced from the father of their three children but still remained to have a good relationship for the sake of their children. The eldest child participated in the study who was their only son, aged 14. Although the son reported talking about general things relating to sex with his mother he felt that he talked more to his father when they play football together. The father mainly initiated the conversations about sex when the son got his first serious girlfriend at the age of 13. This has often been in a joking way but, the son feels that his dad has talked to him the most about sexuality because they are both of the same gender and because his father does not want him to make the mistakes that he did when he was young himself. Although the son gets embarrassed talking to his mother about sex because she is of the opposite sex he feels he could go to her if he had any problems. The mother feels that she did have the sexual-knowledge to teach her son if he wanted to talk to her, but he prefers to talk to his father who often spends time with their son. Although the mother learnt things from the multimedia program she felt that her son would feel uncomfortable talking to her about many of the sexual matters detailed in the multimedia program, such as sexual fantasies and masturbation even though she is quite sure her ex-husband will have mentioned these things when he spends time with their son. The multimedia program was therefore

found to not remove barriers for the mother and son to discuss sexual matters, but it may have provided prompts for the son to talk to his father more about sexual matters.

### **Family 18 – Study II**

Family 18 lived in the Middlesbrough area. The mother was aged 35 and was a midwife. She was divorced from the father of their two children but was about to re-marry for the second time. Her husband-to-be acts as the fatherly figure to their two sons with the children not having any contact with their biological father. The eldest son of 14 years old participated in the study. He seemed a really nice young man who had a good relationship with his mum and soon to be step-father. Although the mother was brought up in a strict Catholic family where conversations about sex were forbidden she was determined to make sure her children received better sex education than she did. She has since become an atheist because of the restrictions religion can place upon people's lives. Neither of the children were religious even though they attend a catholic school. This was mainly because the mother felt that children get taught a better curriculum and the morals and values to have respect. However, the son was not necessarily happy with the sex education the school provided and therefore talked to his friends and parents to find out more about sex. The mother also reported talking to her friends and learnt through sexual experiences to have a better understanding of sexual matters. Although the son reported talking to both his mother and step-dad, the mother felt that her son gets embarrassed talking to her about sexuality and therefore his step-father would initiate these conversations. Although the family were complimentary about the contents of the multimedia program they felt that they had covered most of the content when discussing sexual issues previously. However, the mother felt that their son may ask questions based on the multimedia program at a later date.

## **Family 19 – Study II**

Family 19 lived in the Middlesbrough area. The mother was aged 38 and was a social worker. She was divorced from the father of their eldest daughter who was 14 and who participated in the study but engaged to the father of their youngest daughter who was 4 years old. It was evident that the mother and daughter did not discuss sexual topics openly within the family. The daughter even remarked that she would not have taken part in the study if her mother had been present throughout the interview. Although the mother was brought up in a strict Catholic family she became an atheist because she did not believe in the faith she was brought up with. The mother was also keen to not instil religious beliefs onto her own children because of the negative effect it had on her own upbringing. This was especially concerned with the lack of sex education that she received. Although the mother wanted conversations about sex to occur between her and her own daughter the daughter felt embarrassed talking about sex with her mother. She found out mostly about it through talking to her friends, boyfriend and the Internet. The mother also learnt about sex from talking to her friends when she was younger and by learning through the sexual experiences she had in her teenage years. The mother wanted it to be different for her own daughter but feels helpless because she will not talk to her about sexual matters even if the mother initiates the conversations. For this reason the multimedia program was not beneficial in removing barriers for discussing sexual issues even though the mother and daughter had complimentary comments about the resource.

## **Family 20 – Study II**

Family 20 lived in the Middlesbrough area. The mother was aged 44 and was a customer adviser. Her husband was a project manager but was not at the interview through work commitments. They had two children and the eldest child of 15 participated in the study.

The mother and daughter appeared to have a close relationship whereby sexual matters were discussed openly. Although the daughter felt she could talk to her father she preferred to talk to her mother with being of the same gender and her understanding more about what she was experiencing. The mother and daughter reported having private conversations about sex at night when they were alone and when the youngest sibling was in bed. Although there were family restrictions on sexuality being discussed the mother and daughter would spend time together, such as when cooking tea or watching television together. Although the mother could talk to her children openly about sex she felt she only had adequate knowledge when she was in her mid twenties after being in a relationship and starting work whereby conversations about sex would occur with her colleagues. Before this time the mother had been given poor sex education whereby sexual matters were not discussed within the family. The mother felt this was mainly through embarrassment of her parents but, was determined to make sure it was different with her own children. Although the multimedia program was found to not increase sexual matters being discussed between the mother and daughter they both thought it was a good resource, which would be beneficial for the younger sibling when he gets a little older.

Section 7.2.2 has provided a background into the families that took part in the study. However, it is important to show the findings from the grounded theory analysis, which will now be provided. The following analysis was depicted from the semi-structured interviews, which informed the overall theory.

### **7.2.3 GROUNDED-THEORY ANALYSIS FROM INTERVIEWS 1-20**

#### ***7.2.3.1 SEX EDUCATION PARENTS RECEIVED***

It is important to be aware of the sex education parents received as this could have a bearing on the sexual knowledge they pass onto their own children. When being interviewed the majority of parents felt that they had the sexual knowledge to teach their children about sexual issues. This was especially so when discussing feelings and emotional aspects associated with physical development, puberty and sexual relationships. However, after what parents reported it is unlikely that too much of this sexual knowledge was gained from the formal sex education they received from school, as parents recalled being dissatisfied with the sex education they were given when they were younger. This was mainly because the content of the sex education provided focused on the biological elements of sex and did not include aspects associated with emotions in relation to sex in the context of a relationship. For example, the mother from Family 3 recalled:

“The biggest thing I remember about was that if you had sex, you would get pregnant, but there was very little about diseases or contraception, or very little about your body being ready for sex. It was very much about you just don’t do it, that’s what I remember. It was more about the fear associated with sex in my day.”

The mother of Family 4 said: “I can’t even remember contraception being taught”, while another mother referred to her sex education as:

“We were told all about hamsters and that was it. We were drawn a picture of a hamster, a cage and a wheel and this is how it applies to humans. This was taught in 1966 ... about 12 or 13 and the big topic was periods, but it was made more of a joke” (mother, Family 11).

Several parents referred to periods and reproduction as the main topics, and stated that that was all (mother of Family 7, 18 and 20, and father of Family 9). Reference was also made to the hilarity associated with the so called ‘sex education’ given. For example, the mother of Family 14 said: “We got taught in assembly where everybody just laughed



and nobody took it seriously” ... it “was hilarious” (mother, Family 19). This was also the case for the mother of Family 17, even though her sex education was more comprehensive than parents from other families, as can be seen from the following quote:

“In junior school we didn’t get any, but in secondary school I remember all the boys and girls had to go in to the theatre and on the screen we got this video shown and they went through the male and females body changes and then showed you how to put a condom on the penis before these stick men type people had sex. Girls also got given a little case with tampons in for their periods. The video also showed STIs, in particular syphilis and then we walked out and for the next week everything we had seen, including green stuff coming out of the end of the penis just became a great big laugh. That’s all I can remember”.

The sex education given to parents was also criticised for excluding important issues associated with sexual relationships such as respect, feelings, emotions (mother, Family 7), and how the body changes over time. One mother recalled: “I was starting to change physically and emotionally, but I just got on with it. I did not know what I needed to know, but I just knew I needed information to help me deal with the changes that were happening to me” (Mother, Family 8). These statements emphasise the poor sex education that was given to parents when they were younger. However, 2 out of 26 parents interviewed reported that regardless of the sex education given at school they were provided with the sexual knowledge from their parents due to sexual matters being openly discussed within the family. One father reported that his mother was the main parent to teach him:

“Mum talked to me about sex. I think this started about when I was 12 or 13, but she was always quite open and honest with us about lots of things, really ...things were happening to me so I would ask her ... I was a lot closer to my mum” (father, Family 9).

The other father referred to both parents:

“Mine were totally open about everything and nothing was hidden ... Everything from puberty to sexual relationships was discussed and nothing was left uncovered ... I learnt everything from such a young age and nothing was made an issue of ... I think I knew it all when I was about 18 because I had chance to put into context what I had been told” (father, Family 14).

On the whole, mothers (Families 1, 3, 4, 13, 17, 20) indicated to have learned sexual matters from their mothers, but not from their fathers: “My dad was always working”

(mother, Family 20). These conversations between mothers and daughters were often found to be brief and mainly associated with menstruation and other puberty issues associated with female development. Information on sex within a relationship was often not included, leaving mothers ill-prepared and not reassured for when they entered a personal sexual relationship (mother, Family 7). The main reason parents gave for the sex education at home being brief or non-existent was their own parents being embarrassed: "I think it was quite embarrassing for many people, which prevented it from being discussed" (mother, Family 12). Some family dynamics showed how the younger generation might feel differently. This was illustrated by Family 1:

"I mean it is embarrassing isn't it?" (father) ... "Yes, it can be" (mother) ... "Well I don't think it is embarrassing" (daughter) ... "Well no but today's generation and young people are different to the way we are and we only think like that by the way we were taught. Although you don't think it is, and we don't make it that way with you it was like that for us, more than it is for you" (mother).

Parents (from Family 14) also expressed how teachers felt awkward when giving sex education at school:

"I think it was just so embarrassing and that's why I got told very little from adults. I know my parents didn't tell me anything, but even the school teachers were red faced and embarrassed when telling you things, so I think that has been passed on to how I am with our son. I think I would get embarrassed if I had to tell him all the things his dad has" (mother) ... "Would you?" (father) ... "Yes, because I don't know the best way to talk about sex and things like that. It might be different if he was a girl, but I don't know if it would or how I would discuss it openly. I know we are open with him about everything, but you do tell him more about sex than I do. Sorry, I am just being honest" (mother).

The latter quote shows how embarrassment associated with discussing sexual matters when parents were younger was found to affect how they communicated with their own children. The sex education parents received was furthermore hampered by sex being a 'taboo' subject, especially in Catholic families. Parents illustrated this by the comments they made when referring to their religious upbringing. 'No sex before marriage' was the norm in Catholicism, hence the impact on sexual communication as expressed by the following mothers:

"...family are strict Catholics and there is no sex before marriage type thing... (mother, Family 15).

“The messages that we got taught was that sex was taboo and it wasn’t very nice. You never did it before you were married, not that it didn’t go on, and it was just something you never discussed. It was almost like you needed to find out about sex, but that was only when you were married” (mother, Family 5).

Several parents recalled how sex was seen “... in a dirty way...” (mother, Family 15), or “... not dirty maybe, but just not acceptable behaviour...” (mother, Family 16), or “... in a pornographic way...”; “... dirty, unacceptable and discussion was stopped pretty quick if people did mention anything to do with sex and the subject was changed” (mother, Family 9). Several parents can remember how the television was switched off when any sexual behaviour was shown:

“Some of the things they watch on television would just have been turned off when I was younger and sometimes I feel embarrassed when they are watching programmes of a sexual nature, but I think that is because of the way I was brought up” (mother, Family 10).

“I can still remember a day his dad (the fathers dad) came in here and the television was on and two people were snogging and he just says ‘*Piffle*’ and turns it over” (mother, Family 9) ... “Yes, I remember that day. He just went around the house saying ‘*Piffle*’, strange old bugger wasn’t he?” (father, Family 9) ... “Well your not quite as strange as you, love, but that was just his way, but I couldn’t imagine them getting sex education either” (mother, Family 9).

In several cases, parents were not seen as sex educators. Parents expressed “... I think there was also that assumption that the school would teach you about it, not just sex, but other topics. In those days parents were not really the educators” (father, Family 9); “I don’t believe they had any sex education and I think I know more than they do” (father, Family 16); “I don’t know if it is because she was Catholic or if it is because it is down to the lack of education” (mother, Family 19).

Although the statements provided illustrate that parents received poor sex education at home because of it being an embarrassing and taboo subject to discuss they also expressed how they thought their own parents did not have the knowledge to educate them regarding sexual matters. Sex was seen as something you would learn about when getting married. It appeared that too much sexual knowledge before this time would encourage sexual relations, which at the time was seen as a forbidden act.

“... we were not taught beyond what they told us, otherwise they would have seen it like they were encouraging us to have sex and that was just not acceptable” (mother, Family 15).

Therefore, parents had to learn about sexual matters in a variety of ways that did not include school sex education and sexual matters being discussed in the home environment. For mothers, this was mainly through picking up sexual information from friends and older sisters, reading girly-magazines and through listening to other people’s conversations.

“I tended to try and listen in on people’s conversations about sexual matters and therefore I was only getting to know little bits rather than getting to know all that was needed to be taught” (mother, Family 5).

For fathers, learning about sexual matters came from friendly banters with their male friends, through listening to other people’s conversations and from reading/viewing pornographic magazines:

“Everybody did because nobody talked about it so the oldest lad would buy the magazine, tell the woman behind the counter it was for his dad and then we would educate each other on what sex and other sexual matters were all about by discussing its content” (father, Family 9).

It is interesting that fathers in families 9, 10 and 14 revealed that they learned about sexual matters in this way. The question is in what way was pornography the same as being in a loving relationship, which nowadays it is expressed in values from father to son, for example:

“... we have made sure he knows about safety, respect, love and caring in relation to sex and sexual relationships. I talk to him about it and I know he has a good understanding about things” (father, Family 14).

Some mothers remarked that they had learned about sexual matters by actually engaging in sexual relationships, such as in Family 16:

“Everything I have learnt about sex has come from my children’s father who I had been with for fourteen years. By participating in the relationship ... Yes, I think he taught me a lot” (mother, Family 16).

Other mothers obtained their sexual knowledge from a young age by experimenting in casual relationships:

“I mean by the time I had the period talk at school, I had started my period, so I had already had the experience before the giving of information ... my older friend. I mean I think we learnt a lot from experience in that we were both sexually active from a young age; in fact far too early. So I probably

found out through probably practising sex and with her being like me we would educate each other ... for all I had experiences when I was younger I think as you get older you learn more because you become a lot more ease with your body and you have different relationships that allow you to find out new things” (mother, Family 19).

“Probably 15 or 16 when I left school, really. I think it was at this time I was starting to learn by experience, but we never got told the information, you just had to find it out for yourself” (mother, Family 18).

One parent in particular was filled with self-reproach from the early sexual relationship she had. The mother from Family 16 expressed how if she had been given better sex education she may have made different choices with her life:

“I also think looking back I fell pregnant because I was very inexperienced, very un-knowledgeable about sex and anything to do with it and I even remember starting my period and really thinking I am dying. What is happening here? But there was nobody who would talk to me about it or anything to do with sex and development ... I mean I have always found out things after the event in that I fell pregnant and then I learnt about sex; I have a baby and then I use contraception. I did put myself on the pill when I was 18, but it was too late because I was already pregnant. It sounds silly I know, but one of your questions was if I had had better sex education, would I have made different choices with my life. I am not sure, I think I would still have had the children, but I think I would maybe have chosen a different time to have them. I am not saying I live with regrets because I don’t, but looking back I would have been able to maybe offer them better if I had been older, especially when having my first. I feel they have missed out because of choices I have made. What I mean by this is the way they have missed out on not really having my family around them when growing-up.”

It was interesting to find that most parents explicitly indicated that they want better learning experiences for their own children. For example, the mother from Family 3 expressed:

“Because I think that I grew up with a lot of Catholic guilt, I don’t want it to be that was for my kids. Because I think realistically when you get taught like that and you have a sexual relationship, you feel bad about it, and feel guilty and bad about yourself when really sex is normal and kids should be taught it is normal to have feelings. Kids have enough to cope with when growing up they don’t need to feel guilt or feel ashamed of themselves. I just don’t want my kids growing up like I did. I want them to have feelings and I want them to know what is out there that is going to make their lives easier. I also don’t want my kids to feel embarrassed about going through puberty and growing up, because it is normal. I mean I could talk to my mum about sex, but it was just the whole culture in how we grew up that made it difficult to sometimes talk about sex and relationships. There was no variety, but instead very strict guidelines and for all I want my kids to have guidelines, I don’t want them to be afraid of talking to me about anything.”

Not having to worry about sexual matters was also a reason for mothers to encourage children to speak to them, as for example revealed by the mother of Family 6:

“I remember it being difficult to talk about SRE in those days and I suppose that’s why I try and encourage them to talk to me, because I don’t want them to have the worries or lack of information I did.”

Other families also tried to have an open and close relation with each other to facilitate communications about sexuality:

“I just look back and think I want better for my children and I want that closeness, which I think I have got which allows them to talk to me about things, but I didn’t have that with my mother I think as well you see where your parents went wrong and I don’t want that with my children” (mother, Family 20).

“I am open with my sons. I have definitely done things differently through the way I was taught. I think my eldest son has a better relationship with his dad when talking about sex because he sees it as a man thing. Even though I encourage him and say he can talk to me, I suppose I am lucky that me and his dad get on and we are good friends, so I think that helps the kids in the fact that they know they can come to us both” (mother, Family 17).

One of the reasons expressed is the recognition of sex as an essential part of life: “... that’s why I want my children to have the sex education I didn’t have” (mother, Family 8), and that it is not denied every time the word is used: “... I suppose when we were deciding to have kids we just wanted better for them than we had had when we were younger without shouting ‘*Piffle*’ every time sex was mentioned. We are quite liberal and close as a family” (father, Family 9). However, such an attitude does not mean that the education provided will promote sexual activity:

“... I think he needs to be educated and I want him to have better sex education offered to him than I had. I want him to be able to make choices, but I don’t want the sex education that he receives to be promoted as though he should have sex...” (mother, Family 5).

All in all, parents have reflected upon how they were taught about sexual matters and how they want better sex education to be provided to their own children:

“It is important to me that my children know about sexual matters and relationships. Not like what it was like for us when we were growing up where you had to figure it out for yourself” (mother, Family 13).

“I think it is the case of you always try and give your kids the things you never got. I know how it affected me not having proper sex education and I want better for my girls ... I know she gets sex education, because she gets it from me” (mother, Family 16).

However, they were reluctant to reinforce the religious beliefs they were brought up with onto their own children, especially because religion is on the decline in the younger generation, as illustrated in the conversation of Family 8:

“I am just Church of England and when I say just I do mean ‘*just*’ because I didn’t choose to be. My parents made that choice and so I will only follow my religion if I want to ... kids are not as religious as we used to be when we were younger” (father) ... “Yes, I agree in that religion is becoming a dying past

because kids are not made to be part of one religion or the other, it seems to me these days parents are concentrating on the negative experiences they had as children and making it different for their own children, which is what I do with mine. I want better for my children and I think that is the same for other parents as well” (mother).

This was the opinion of some parents, regardless of whether they were brought up in a religious family:

“...regardless of their religious beliefs know that and therefore shouldn’t feel guilty for living their own lives and doing what they want to do, but they need to do it safely and at the right time for them” (mother, Family 3).

“The youth of today are not as interested in religion as people were when I was younger so it is unfair to make them be something just for the sake of parents’ belief systems. They have to find out who they are as people. God, this is deep, sorry” (mother, Family 11).

However, parents still wanted their children to be brought up with good values and morals but not necessarily with the associated influences and restrictions of religion.

Parents also expressed how they wanted their children to learn about sexual matters at a time when they are able to understand and put this education in the context of the morals and values parents tried to instil upon their children:

“I think what I teach my children is the morals and the values needed for adult life and I do believe that children need to be educated and they do need the knowledge, which is far more important than any religion or religious steering” (mother, Family 8) ... “I agree with my wife in that when bringing up our children we want them to have the values and morals which are going to steer them as people” (father, Family 8).

“I may have given them the sexual knowledge from a young age but it has never been given in isolation in that it has excluded the important things that go hand and hand with sex, such as being caring, loving and respectful” (mother, Family 15).

These statements highlight how parents want sexual matters to be taught to their own children; however, it is important to highlight how sexual topics were discussed within families to ensure children were told the sexual facts and accurate information that parents were not fortunate enough to receive when they were younger.

#### ***7.2.3.2 SRE GIVEN TO CHILDREN***

Parents reported talking to their children from a young age about sex-related topics:

“Do you remember when I was pregnant with your sister; we talked about sexual things then didn’t we? Remember when you were only three years, four years old and you asked about the baby and how it got in there. I know I talked to you differently then to how I did when you were nine, but that was sex education

... I remember when I was pregnant and I took her (the daughter) to see the nurse for her health check up and the nurse was talking to me and just gave her a pen and a piece of paper. She has always been arty and whilst we were talking she drew a picture of a stick man, with this big belly, and she had drawn a baby inside this big tummy. I still have the picture, but the nurse had said to her at the age of three, what is this? And she explained that she was going to have a baby sister who is not ready yet because mummy has to help her grow and that's why she is warm and safe inside mummy's tummy. She was dumb-founded with the details she gave, so I suppose she probably knew from about three years old, or as young as she was when understanding things that I told her" (mother, Family 4).

Although this may have been related to the reproduction of animals or based on the questions children may ask through being inquisitive, parents reported talking generally about sexual issues at a level their children could understand as they were growing up:

"Well he (the son) is quite bright and although he did not talk about sex in relation to humans he was interested in Science and learnt about cells and sperm cells came into it and also he was quite interested in animals from an early age ... so although sex was discussed loosely in relation to humans but mainly brought about through talking about developments in plants and animals and how they reproduce probably from about the age of 5 or 6 years old. But about sexual matters with him he probably had a knowledge base by the age of 7 or 8 because he is quite bright and he understands the information that you give and that he asks for" (mother, Family 7).

Another mother reported:

"I mean she has always loved watching animal programmes and when she asks about puppies, or kittens or any other animal you can't do anything but give them the correct information that they have asked about. I mean at 5 years old I wouldn't explain things like I would now, but I would do it in a way that she gets the facts, but make sure I give them at a level she is going to understand" (mother, Family 12).

Although it was found that communications about sexual matters would occur when children were inquisitive and asked questions, parents also initiated conversations through observing developmental changes. One mother recalled: "You can pick out times that you want to talk about it as you see them develop because you know they are changing anyway and you know then what the right time is to say certain things" (mother, Family 1). Mothers also felt it was important that children should firstly know "the differences between boys and girls" (mother, Family 15) and that "It is important that they (their children) are equipped with the correct information and not be fobbed off" (mother, Family 8). Parents recalled further to initiate conversations when their children started to become interested in the opposite sex by having boyfriends and girlfriends: "You know when boyfriends appear on the scene or when they start talking



about boys” (mother, Family 1) that they are becoming “more sexual interested having a proper boyfriend” (mother, Family 19). That is the time when it is important to start “talking to them about condoms and protecting themselves” (mother, Family 16). However, sexual conversations about the opposite sex and other sexual matters were also found to increase through something children had read in magazines. Girls reported that although magazines, especially the problem pages can be “... good as it gives you an idea of how people cope with different situations” (daughter, Family 4) mothers felt that magazines can put a “... lot of pressure on young people to behave in a certain way” (mother, Family 12). However, it was acknowledged that magazines “... can be a good thing in that it generates conversations” (mother, Family 12). It was also revealed that television “... is a good thing” (mother, Family 9) in that it can have “... a knock-on effect” (father, Family 9) and “... can help generate conversations so they can learn more (father, Family 10). Although it was found that “... television programmes can be useful, especially Eastenders and Coronation Street” (son, Family 8) parents reported that their children “... learn things about homosexuality and contraception (mother, Family 7) and therefore “... it can be educational” (mother, Family 10) and “... not like a formal learning” (son, Family 7) approach such as how children learn about sexual topics at school. In sum, the media has been shown to be a powerful source:

“The media has quite a big impact over what I learn ... it shows girls getting pregnant then having an abortion and how this can ruin your life” (son, Family 13) ... “I think the media are a good thing in that it generates conversations that might not have been talked about otherwise” (father, Family 13).

Although the media gives children the opportunity to learn about sexual matters from other people’s perspective parents had reservations as to the messages and magnitude of sexual content shown as it did not reinforce the values and morals they try to instil upon their children. A good example of this was expressed by the mother in Family 12:

“I mean that is just a *‘free-for-all’* that shows no morals what-so-ever. So yes, I think they see so much of it, everywhere they turn. I think the messages that come up is that it is okay to have sex when you want and little deterrent is shown to young people which is why I think there is a lot more young mums. Pretty much everything comes across as acceptable. I mean on TV the other night a *‘Rainbow Party’* was mentioned as I thought what is that? I kept watching the TV and basically it was a competition to see which lad at this party could be given the most oral sex, which I just thought was disgusting. I mean I go to bed most nights before 10:30pm so it would have been on before then, I think on channel 4. I just thought what are young people learning from this?” (mother, Family 12).

Concerns over the media were also expressed by other parents (families 1, 3-6, 8, 14, 16-19) who felt that “... it is everywhere” (mother, Family 4) and that children are often “bombarded” (mother, Family 18) with information that sometimes promotes sex in a negative way. For example, the father in Family 1 said:

There is far too much, like a torture type thing in that you have to watch it all the time ... I mean it is not pornography, it is just seductive. I mean young women will be dancing with just knickers and a vest on and I am sure that our daughter isn’t affected by it, but it is there when young people turn on the television and it is suggestive. It sometimes passes out the incorrect message to young people.”

Another parent reported:

“It is almost like sex is too ready available. It is like a package; it is almost marketed now” (mother, family 5).

Parents also expressed concerns with the media exposing “having affairs, multiple partners and casual sex” (mother, Family 14) especially because “it does not address responsibility, respect, caring for others and doing something that you want to do for yourself and not that sex should take place because it is seen or portrayed as the norm” (father, Family 14). Although parents were aggrieved by some of the sexual messages portrayed in the media families agreed that the sexual content shown did generate communication in the families. In addition to this the formal sex education at school was also revealed to generating sexual conversations in several families.

Children reported talking to their mothers about sexual matters when coming home from school, mostly as a result of mothers initiating these conversations by asking children about their day and asking questions about what they had been taught. This provided an avenue for children to elaborate on things they had been told, and allowed parents to “... explain in a lot more detail than teachers” (son, Family 9).

Although conversations about sexual issues were mentioned to mainly occur between mothers and their children because fathers were often at work, in some cases these were also revealed by fathers. Especially when time was spent together, such as in the case of sharing a sporting activity and spending quality time together. For example, father and son from Family 14 reported:

“I just talk in general to my dad about almost anything and everything ... when we are out biking” (son) ... “I think we tend to have quite a lot of conversations when it is just me and him when we are out bike riding ... we spend a lot of time together alone, and these conversations are mixed in with something else like riding a bike so it takes the emphasis of the fact that we are talking about sex ... masturbation ... that is one of the things we have had a good conversation about when we went biking at Whitby, so he does know things” (father).

A further quote to illustrate the openness of sexual matters being discussed between fathers and sons came from Family 9:

“We were coming back from football that night” (son) ... “What was that about?” (Mother) ... “Him asking about body piercing and why do people get them on their genitals and nipples” (father) ... “It can help increase the sensation when having sex, just for some people you know” (son) *Father and son laughed* “And how would you know?” (Mother) ... “Dad told me” (son) ... “I told you I would answer any questions” (father) ... “You could have told me” (mother) ... “I did, it was months ago” (father). *The family laugh together.*

Families in general were also found to discuss sexual matters “...when watching TV together or whilst making meals” (mother, Family 12). These conversations were extenuated upon mainly between mothers and daughters when having quiet times together when they could be alone (families 8 and 20). A statement to illustrate this, which demonstrated the closeness between mothers and daughters, came from Family 20. The mother reported:

“I talk to her about things and she wants to talk to me. I know she had been out with her boyfriend last week and when she came home I was in bed reading and she came up and sat on the edge of the bed. I asked if she was alright and whether she had had a good time. She then just came and got into the bed for a cuddle and she cried for the next twenty minutes because they had finished. Now why she didn’t just go to her room and cry by herself I don’t know, I think she just prefers to share things with me. I feel it is quite an honour, but at the same time that is the way I have always been with her in the fact that I do openly discuss things with her, so that might be why she did it, but I think we are quite close anyway” (mother, Family 20).

These statements illustrate the informal ways in which sexual matters are discussed within families. However, it is important to identify what SRE topics children learn about in a formal way at school. Children were sometimes critical on how SRE is delivered within

schools. The main criticisms related to boys and girls receiving different amounts of sex education. The brother and sister from Family 8 reported:

“Girls got an extra session before we all got the standard sex education as a class. I know it was probably to do with periods, but lads need to know about what girls are going through and vice-versa” (son, Family 8) ... “I think just the same” (daughter, Family 8) ... “I wasn’t happy the way boys and girls were separated because when we have single sex classes you don’t get to know about what both sexes are experiencing” (son, Family 8).

The sex education at school was found to also be rushed and incomplete (sons, families 9 and 17) and therefore children felt that the sex education they received was very poor. This was expressed by the oldest son in Family 10 who stated:

“The school we go to because of being part of a Catholic religion doesn’t see it that way, in that they decide what we should and shouldn’t be taught. I would prefer teachers to give us the education, but they don’t tell us everything, or some teachers are not open about all the facts when giving sex education ... when I went to ... (secondary school) with it being a Catholic school they would just say ‘*no sex before marriage*’ and therefore you didn’t get taught much about sex.

The majority of children indicated a preference of SRE being taught in mixed-sex classes with the same information, including sexual matters that affected the opposite sex. Especially, education received via the Sex Education Roadshow was mentioned several times as pupils were all taught together, were able to ask questions and got the correct information from “professionals” who were more aware of the facts and the SRE young people wanted to receive. This was illustrated in a quote from the son in Family 17:

“At school we also had people come in to do a roadshow last year ... I didn’t know about the diseases and that’s what I felt I needed to know more about, but then the roadshow taught me and that which was good ... I have picked the other facts up from the roadshow.”

Although the majority of parents were not told directly what SRE was taught to their children by the school, they learnt some of its content through talking to their children. Based on these conversations parents felt that the sex education they as parents gave at home “... doesn’t seem to be backed up or reinforced in school to let kids know what they should be doing and what they shouldn’t be doing” (mother, Family 3). Parents reported that schools do not “... teach it for long enough (mother, Family 4) and that “... it needs to

constantly be reinforced and tailored to the needs of young people” (mother, Family 7). This was illustrated by a parent who stated:

“The education seems all itty-bitty and in no structured way because to be honest I don’t think the sex education has improved much since I was at school. They may touch on subjects we were not taught about, but they are still not giving all the information young people need to be knowing about” (mother, Family 4).

Parents felt that “... a lot of the body stuff is going to happen” (mother, Family 3) and therefore it is more important for schools to teach about contraception, STIs, peer pressure and “... how they should keep themselves safe” (mother, Family 3). Parents furthermore expressed a wish to be informed about the sex education that is provided to their children (Families 2-20). This was mainly so that they could be prepared for the sexual conversations that were likely to arise, but also in that it “... prompts parents and helps them talk to their children” about the SRE they have received. In essence, parents believed it was their responsibility to teach their children: “I just know that as parents we have a responsibility to give our children the knowledge they need for becoming adults” (mother, family 8), but felt that the school had an obligation as well. Although there were criticisms from parents and their children based on the formal SRE curriculum that was taught at school it did act as a basis for children to ask their parents more about what they had been told at school. This therefore indirectly increased sexual communications within families, which acted as a facilitator. However, other factors were found to facilitate and inhibit sexual communications within families.

### ***7.2.3.3 FACILITATORS AND BARRIERS FOR SEXUAL COMMUNICATIONS WITHIN FAMILIES***

Facilitators for sexual communications

Family relationships start with the foundation of love, trust, respect, commitment, support and stability. Parents show these qualities from early in their child’s life allowing for them to be expanded upon and reinforced, forming good relationships between family members.

This was evident from the study in families who discussed sexual matters openly. It was found that ‘Trust’ was paramount. Numerous statements from children revealed that if they trusted their parents, then they were more likely to talk to them about sexual matters and their personal experiences. For example, the son from Family 7 reported:

“When I tell my mum things I know my mum will keep it a secret. If I need to know something that is private I know I can trust her as well not to say anything ... I can trust my mum and I know she will talk to me about things ... I am closer to my mum and I trust her a lot more.”

A further quote to illustrate the importance of trust between parents and their children came from the son and daughter from Family 8:

“For me it is because I can trust them and you talk to them on more of a personal level because they are your parents” (son) ... “You can trust your parents, but you can’t trust your friends because they will talk about you behind your back; mum wouldn’t do that to me” (daughter).

Trust inadvertently demonstrated honesty within families. This was illustrated by the son in Family 9 when referring to talking to his parents about sexual matters.

“She (his mother) probably knows more about it and I can trust her as well” (son) ... “I think you also know that when you do ask questions I am always going to tell you the truth” (mother) ... “Yes, that was also what I was trying to say, but it is also not just to do with being honest it is also that I trust you not to tell anybody else” ... “Aw, you trust me do you son? (joking)” (mother) ... “Well I have to really, you are my mum ... Pretty much the same reasons for talking to my mum; I can also trust my dad” (son).

It was found that children who regarded their parents as role models were likely to mimic their parents behaviour by reciprocating the openness of discussing sexual matters within families. In addition, parents’ knowledge of sexual matters also facilitated sexual communications. It was revealed that if children perceived their parents to have the knowledge to teach them about sexual matters, sexual communications were increased. This was emphasised by the occupation of parents as illustrated by the sons in Family 2 and 12, who stated:

“She (the mother) is a nurse, so she knows about it and she has been there eighteen years, which is quite encouraging ... (talk to) Mum, because dad’s a butcher ... He is just thick!” (son, Family 2).

“Being a nurse she would know stuff that the school wouldn’t” (son 2, Family 15).

A further quote to illustrate children's perception of their parent's knowledge came from Family 14:

"He (the father) just seems to be more knowledgeable about what I am going through" (son) ... "I think we can give him the knowledge that he needs know and then he will learn things for himself, so I think I do to equip him with the information that he needs to know or I would find out if I didn't know something that he asked or wanted to know more about" (father).

Parents also reported that if they did not know about particular sexual issues then they would be proactive in finding out the facts so that they could educate their children. This was demonstrated by the mother in Family 4 who reported talking to other parents who were perhaps more knowledgeable than her. The mother reported:

"... if I don't know the answer I will find it out and then explain it to you properly, don't I? I know other mums with kids in their early teens so I will drop it into the conversation when talking to them as though I don't know and then I will tell her so nobody knows that I am asking for her (the daughter). This way she doesn't get embarrassed and she still finds out the answer to what she asked me about" (mother).

Another parent reported:

"I don't know if I would be able to answer all of their questions, but I would be honest with them if I did not know, but I would then either go to the library or on the Internet to find out the information they needed to know more about ... I think she comes in and asks questions, but then I will ask her questions to make sure she has the correct knowledge on something, but with him he is that bit older and has the knowledge so I concentrate more on the emotional side with him. I just know that as parents we have a responsibility to give our children the knowledge they need for becoming adults" (family 8).

This reinforces the role of parents in that they want the best for their children and are committed and supportive towards their needs. However, other family members apart from parents were also found to facilitate sexual communications within families.

It was revealed that older sisters would "... break the ice" (mother, Family 10) and that older brothers talk to younger brothers about sex-related issues. This was illustrated by the son in Family 2:

"I have told them (his two younger brothers) bits about it ... I tell them the slang terms for a penis and things like that, just because that's the words they are hearing when talking to their friends."

Older cousins and uncles who children regarded as role models were also found to improve sexual communications within families. This was especially the case in Family 5 whereby the son regarded his uncle as a fatherly figure:

(Talk to) ... "Tony" (son) ... "That's my brother. What about David?" (mother) ... "Aw yes, I would talk to him about it" (son) ... That's his cousin; he is year 14, so he is a couple of years older than him. Very close, lives next door to us. I can understand him talking to his cousin. I would like to think he could talk to me, but I know he does have other family around him to talk to because with him being male. Boys might want to talk to someone about sex who is the same gender" (mother) ... "They know what it is like for a boy and they have already been through it themselves" (son).

The facilitators that increased family communications have been highlighted however, some of these factors can also serve as barriers for not discussing sexual matters. These will now be discussed in collaboration with the other factors that were found to prevent sexual matters being discussed openly within families.

#### Barriers for sexual communications

Although parents' knowledge was seen to act as a facilitator for some families, sexual communications within families was restricted if children thought their parents did not "... know anything" (son, Family 2) or if they thought they were "thick" (son, Family 2). Discussions on sexual matters between parents and their children were also hindered if children perceived their parent to not have the up-to-date knowledge to teach them. A good example of this was expressed by the sons in Family 11:

"I don't want to talk to them about sex. They can't even get the terminology right" (Son 2) ... "Don't get us wrong we love our parents but they do come across as rather out-dated" (son 1) ... "Yes, like something from the ice-age" (son 2) ... *Laughter* ... "Sorry that is a family joke. We labelled dad as the mammoth off ice-age because he is starting to put on weight and he has too much hair on his head" (son 1). *More laughter.*

Lack of sexual knowledge by parents indirectly lead to embarrassment, which in-turn affected children as they too were embarrassed when discussing sexual topics in the company of their parents. This was demonstrated by Family 10:

"Mum gets embarrassed talking to us about sex (son 2) ... "I do not" (mother) ... "I think sometimes it is embarrassing; we are just unsure of the terminology you use, because it was different for us and you lot are a lot more open about things than we were" (father).

Regardless of knowledge other parents were also found to get embarrassed when talking about sexual matters. This was evident in Family 11 whereby sons stated:

"Aw that would be so bad. Mother talking about sex!" (Son 2) ... "Dad talking about sex!" (son 1) ... "I think they are embarrassed" (son 2) ... "No, you mean they are an embarrassment when talking about sex" (son 1)



... "Dad does and I think that is to do with our embarrassing scenario when I was 11. Poor man, but mum just puts her head down and shuffles away" (son 1).

The mother from Family 11 equated this embarrassment to how she was taught when she was younger. However, the mother stated she would talk to her children if they "... wanted to talk" (mother, Family 11) to her, but agrees with her sons that sexual communications ceased after the event, which follows.

"I can only really remember one thing which generated conversation and that was when they went up into secondary school. My eldest came home and was quite quiet, but we knew that he had had his first sex education lesson. I told my husband with him being of the same sex that it was his job, so anyway he went and asked our son about school and he mentioned this video on sex. My husband had sort of asked what things were shown on the video and our son had said '*a penis, oh and boobs*'. My husband replied well you know what these are; you have seen me and your mum naked. The son replied '*yes well this woman on the video had proper boobs, not like mums*'. Well I was mortified, my husband laughed hysterically and our son's last words were '*giving birth is also disgusting and I do not want to have this conversation again*'. Since then we have respected his opinion and never questioned him in such a way."

The embarrassment felt by children was also heightened when parents asked probing questions about their personal relationships. This was illustrated in the two families from the study who did not discuss sexual matters openly. Family 10 revealed:

"Yes, possibly, but I think you get embarrassed because of the questions I ask when you tell me things" (mother) ... "Yes, I know but you keep nosing into my private life and I don't know what to say" (son 1).

It appeared that when parents asked their children questions about sexual matters that this was seen as an invasion of their privacy, which consequently acted as a barrier for discussing sexual matters openly within families. However, parents who were perceived to be controlling and domineering towards their children also prevented sexual matters being discussed. An example of this was from Family 3 when interviewing a mother and daughter. The daughter firstly claimed she did not discuss sexual matters with her mother. However, when being challenged by her mother in a sharp tone and condemning manner the daughter changed her view and gave socially desirable answers that reflected those given by her mother. The daughter appeared embarrassed throughout much of the interview and looked towards her mother for approval before answering questions. Although there were examples

given by the mother to illustrate that she had a liberal approach to teach her children about sexual matters, the mother and daughter did not explore the multimedia program together during post and follow-up stages of the interview process. This indicated that although the mother claimed she discussed sexual matters openly with her daughter, the daughter may not necessarily have felt comfortable discussing sexual matters with her mother and therefore the daughter expressed a preference for exploring the multimedia program in private.

A similar case of dominant behaviour was seen in Family 5 whereby the son claimed to not discussing sexual matters with his mother and felt embarrassed when the topic came up in his mother's presence. Although the mother in Family 5 disagreed and claimed to discuss sexual matters openly with her son she passed comments, such as:

"I know I might sound like I control what he learns but it isn't like that ... I think the thing is I am a bit of a dictator".

Although it was clear that the mother loved her son and wanted the best for him she was dominant throughout the interview by answering most of the questions or by speaking on behalf of her son. This could be seen as a supportive and protective act on behalf of the mother however, it appeared to make the son uncomfortable because he did not know how to answer the questions, which is why he only gave short replies to the questions that he was asked.

A final barrier for not discussing sexual matters openly within the family was due to younger siblings being present. One of the girls who participated in the study reported that her younger brother "interrupts the conversations" (daughter, Family 20). Parents on the other hand felt that sexual communications are restricted because the content of conversations they have with their older children would be inappropriate in front of younger siblings:

"We are sometimes restricted on what we discuss with me also having only an eight year old daughter. There is no way we could talk about some things with her being around so I think sometimes the moment has passed if

they mention something and I can't elaborate on it because of my 8 year old daughter and her friends being in the house" (Family 6).

To overcome these barriers parents would resume conversations with their older children at a time when they could be alone. For example, the mother in Family 8 reported:

"This house is very busy in that there is always lots going on, so people are coming in all the time, not just children it can be adults picking up one of the kids for football or something like that, but if I was talking to her about something I would stop talking if someone came into the room because what we are talking about is personal, but we will talk about it later. I also go to bed early and when I tuck her in I will ask if there is anything she wants to talk about, so we would come back to what we were talking about and discuss it in more detail then."

A further quote to illustrate that parent's talk to their older children about sexual matters when younger siblings are not present came from the mother in Family 2:

"I get chance to talk about things on a night time. We have half-an-hour when you brothers have gone to bed, so we generally talk about things like this then."

Facilitators and barriers were identified to illustrate how families do, and do not communicate sexual matters. However, there were some comments and examples given to illustrate good practice of sex-education within families.

#### ***7.2.3.4 GOOD PRACTICE OF SEX EDUCATION WITHIN FAMILIES***

Parents had different methods for encouraging their children to discuss sexual matters openly within the family. In Family 9 this could happen in their daily ritual:

"We have this thing on a night time when we all eat together and we go around the table so everybody gets their chance to say what they have done in that day and what has made them laugh? You have to laugh every day because it is the... **MOTHER AND SON SAY AT THE SAME TIME: 'The Law'**. This is a little thing that we do as a family and I suppose this is where I would say we talk openly about sexual matters in that it opens up the conversation to talk about anything and everything."

The mother of Family 15 recalls the time she taught her children how to use condoms properly:

"I know my daughter has quite a few gay friends and they will come here to visit her, but they also get on well with my sons. I also know because of the time my sons spend around these lesbian and gay men that they know all about homosexuality and the need to use condoms. They were all talking once and one of these gay lads said '*you always need to use a condom, whoever you sleep with*', so the next day I when we were sat around I threw a condom at them both (her sons) whilst they were watching the television and said '*see if you can get these out the packet without tearing the condom*'. It was all in a joking way, not encouragement of sex or being dirty, but they then grabbed a carrot from the kitchen and joked about with them, then my daughter came in and they laughed further and then we showed them how to put condoms on properly. Even though it was only on a carrot they had the idea and knew how to use them correctly. They even know how to take it out the packet properly, but they don't teach this, especially when they say to kids '*protect yourself*'. How can they if

they are not shown? And I think these are important lessons to learn. I mean there maybe onetime in the lust of the moment they have sex and if they don't put the condom on properly or there is a hole in it, that is it and whilst I don't encourage my kids to have sex I do want them prepared so they don't make mistakes and god-forbid may have to pay for the rest of their lives."

The openness of discussing sexual matters in Family 15 encouraged boys to experiment further for themselves. A good example of this came from the mother in Family 15, which related to her sons wanting to understand more about tampons:

"I know my kids don't get embarrassed and especially not with me. I mean I will say to my sons *'go to the shop and get us some tampons'* and they will just say *'do you want regular or super-plus mam?'* This is how open we are and I know they are not embarrassed to go and buy tampons and I don't think they would be any different if they had to buy condoms if they needed them. I mean I remember one day me and my daughter had both come on at the same time and I asked my youngest son to go to the shop for some tampons and he said *'you haven't used all those that I bought the other day?'* but off he went and then I later found out that they (the son's) were intrigued as to how they work inside the female. So when I was at work one day they had their friends around and were putting tampons in water to see how quickly they swelled up. I know they had a laugh with their friends, but they had a greater awareness of what females go through and why they need to change tampons on a regular basis. So this taught them something they couldn't read in a book or on a leaflet, so I didn't get cross with them for us me and my daughter not having tampons, but they were happy to go to the shop and buy some for us, but they knew about menstruation from an early age because even though they did not need tampons. They would see them laid around in the bathroom and I just told them in the same way as I told my daughter, so they never get embarrassed talking about it because they know this is just the way of life for females at one time throughout the month. I think the tampon experience was good for them because they have an appreciation of what girls go through and that they will get irritable from time to time, but also I think it has took away that need to talk and be smutty towards girls when it is there time for their periods."

On a serious note the mother from Family 8 emphasised how good practice of sex education within families should be:

"I think this is excellent the way we are all sat around now talking about sex very openly and I think for someone like yourself to come into this house and get my kids, especially her (the daughter) to talk about sex in front of her dad and brother is brilliant. This is the way it should be discussed. I mean your mum (talking about her husband) was marvellous with you when she knew she was going to pass on in that she sat you at the end of her bed and gave you all the information you could possibly know or that she knew to tell you because she wasn't going to be around to educate you in the future. She was a brilliant mum, and that is the way I want to be with my kids, but I just don't have the facts to tell them, so I try and offer the other side in regards to relationships and how we can find things out together so they don't go through what I went through."

These statements highlight that parents want their children to be encouraged to discuss sexual matters openly in the family. In this study, families were encouraged to discuss sexual matters further by exploring a sex education multimedia program.

Although these findings have demonstrated the findings from the in-depth semi-structured interviews, it is important to assess this impact of the multimedia program on sexual communications within families. This is especially so in relation to interpersonal

communication and the effects of the multimedia program as these were two of the aims that were pertinent to this investigation.

#### **7.2.3.5 INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION**

Interpersonal communication differed between families, which was dependent upon their shared history of communicating sexual matters. In families where sexual matters had been discussed openly, parents and their children would display both direct (e.g. verbal and non-verbal cues) and indirect (e.g. body language) behaviours that were positive. These behaviours would include positive facial expressions, such as smiling and laughing, and family members would show eye-contact when listening to each other. Indirect behaviours would include sitting close together and touching each other demonstrating that they were comfortable with each other and that they had a close relationship. Two contrasting cases of interpersonal communication in a family are now presented.

In Family 1, sexual matters were discussed openly the father laid on the floor next to his daughter's chair when they watched the multimedia program, whilst the mother would sit in a chair close by, with her feet up. The daughter would look down at the laptop and say which sections her father should click-on. The daughter deliberately picked *homosexuality* knowing that her father was against all the publicity that lesbian and gay people get in the media. The whole family laughed about some of the conversations they had previously referring to homosexuality, with the daughter saying that the father "*goes-on about it*", and the mother commenting "*Big style*". He replied by saying:

"No, I mean if you are that way, then you are that way; no issue, but why encourage it? So usually I am derogatory about that side of things. It's everywhere! The thing about the media is ... in the media there are a lot of lesbians and gays within that median and they get far too much. I mean compared to the percentage of those who are not that way inclined, there is far too much and it almost like a torture type thing in that you have to watch it all of the time".

This demonstrated that as a family they had talked openly about sexual matters previously, especially through something they had seen on television, or in the media (i.e. the Internet).

This finding supports previous research which suggests parents, especially dual parents discuss sexual topics more openly when they have a close and trusting relationship (Jewell, Tacchi, & Donovan, 2000; McCulloch, 2000). However, it does not support previous research that suggests that mothers, more than fathers, talk to their daughter more openly about sexual topics. Interview 1 did, however, demonstrate that sexual conversations are increased by what parents and their children hear, and see in the media. Although an example has been given regarding the interpersonal communication between parents and their children when sexual matters were discussed openly within families as was the case in 1-4, 6-9, 12-16, 18 and 20, this was not the case in five of the families who took part in the research (families 5, 10, 11, 17 and 19). An example of the interpersonal communication in families where sexual matters were not discussed will now be given.

Family 10, where the parents and their two sons took part in the research, the two sons were very uncomfortable throughout the whole interview process. This was indicated by the direct behaviours that were shown in that they looked to the floor when their parents talked, they used as few words as possible to reply to the questions asked. Furthermore, they disagreed with aspects of what their parents were saying. This was demonstrated by the following dialogue from the transcripts of a conversation they had.

“Yes, plus mum gets embarrassed talking to us about sex” (son, 2) ... “I do not” (mother) ... “I think sometimes it is embarrassing; we are just unsure of the terminology you use, because it was different for us and you lot are a lot more open about things than we were” (father) ... “Yes, possibly, but I think you get embarrassed because of the questions I ask when you tell me things” (mother) ... “Yes, I know but you keep nosing into my private life and I don’t know what to say” (son) ... “Well I think I have talked to my daughters more than my sons” (mother).

Although the parents tried to remain positive throughout the interview by not responding negatively to their sons actions the indirect behaviours that their sons showed were also negative in that from the start of the interview parents and their sons sat on different sofas, which were positioned at a 45° angle, preventing eye contact and other non-verbal cues.

Furthermore, when watching the multimedia program the sons refused to look at the screen and laughed between themselves, demonstrating that they did not feel comfortable in the current situation and that they did not want to have a conversation with their parents about aspects of the multimedia program. Confirmation that this particular family did not discuss sexual matters openly was obvious, especially when asking the sons if they would have responded differently to the questions if their parent had not been present. When being asked this question the whole family laughed and the sons replied:

“Definitely. I think I would have been able to answer your questions in more depth, but sorry I just can’t talk about anything to do with sex in front of them (son 2) ... “I agree, it is just too embarrassing”.

Although it has been important to identify the interpersonal communication in families when using the multimedia program it is also important to identify the effect that the multimedia program had on parents and children’s knowledge and confidence. The information that follows was collected after conducting the semi-structured interviews as a means of exploring participants views on the impact of the intervention.

## **7.2.4 STUDY 3 – AN EXPLORATION OF THE FAMILIES KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION AND VIEWS OF AN EDUCATIONAL MULTIMEDIA PROGRAM**

### ***7.2.4.1 VIEWS OF THE MULTIMEDIA PROGRAM***

The majority of parents thought the multimedia program was a good resource to educate young people about SRE topics (Families 2-20). The positive comments that related to the intervention were that the program (1) should be “used in collaboration with schools” (Families 2, 4, 5, 6, 12, 19 and 20); (2) “allows children to learn at their own pace in their own time” (Families 3 and 4); (3) content was “good” (Families 5 and 18); (4) was “easy to use” (Family 9) and (5) would be useful in families where sexual issues are difficult to discuss (Family 10). The latter statement came from a family whereby the mother and father did not discuss sexual subjects with their sons. Although parents were complimentary about

the multimedia program, parents in Family 1 where sexual matters were discussed openly were less optimistic of the multimedia program and thought:

“It says what it has to say, but it is in just one direction ... sensible” (mother, Family 1).

However, all other parents disagreed and thought that the multimedia program gave useful information and facts that would help their children learn about a variety of sexual matters in a proper way (Families 3-7, 9, 10, 15 and 20). This was reiterated by parents who commented:

“Really informative in a non-condemning way” (mother, family 6).

Parents and their children also commented on how they liked the “mix of artificial and real characters to discuss the scenarios” (mother and son from Family 9) because they could relate to the information that was given. One father in particular (from Family 9) liked the way sex and sex-related issues were discussed, “not just from a biological aspect”. A further positive comment came from the Mother in Family 16:

“I think it was really good. The more sections you go through the better it gets ...I liked every aspect of it, but I think it was really good in that it was like a soap opera when showing you the different situations young people can find themselves in.”

Although the multimedia program was found to be a good resource by many of the parents, all of the children reported liking the intervention. Comments to this effect that came from the boys were (1) “my friends and I want to find out stuff like this” (Family 2) and (2) “really good” CD (Families 5, 7, 8, 9 15 and 17). Boys who were older (i.e. 14-15 years old) were less impressed by the multimedia program and thought it was “too young” and for them (Families 15 and 18). However, these two boys and their parents (mainly their fathers and their sons) had discussed sexual matters openly within their family from an early age. A further less positive comment of the intervention came from the two boys in Family 11, who stated:

“I think some of the questions should be worded a bit different because some of the answers are based on your own opinion of things. It is what you think as a person as to the answer you would give” (son 2) ... “Yes, such



as the question about stress. If you don't get stressed as a person, then you are going to give a different answer to someone who does get stressed" (son 1).

A further criticism came from the daughter in Family 1 who thought that the multimedia program did not address "peer pressure enough", especially as this is main concern that young people have. However, all other girls who participated in the study reported very positive comments such as, (1) "the multimedia program gave the information needed" (families 3, 4, 12 and 20); (2) "really good and informative" (Families 6 and 19), and (3) they could relate to the content of the resource (Families 8 and 16), which echoed comments made by parents previously. Parents and their children also commented on the sections they liked the most.

Mothers reported liking the following "variety of sections" (Families 3, 11 and 17); communication section; quiz because it gave the facts and allowed children to build upon their sexual-knowledge (Families 4, 5 and 20); animation and signposting (Family 7); body parts (Families 8, 12 and 18), characters and emotions (Family 9) and that the multimedia program was modern and colourful (Families 14, 15 and 16). Fathers also commented on how good they thought the relationships/emotions section was (Family 7) and that the information given on body parts for each gender was good because it gave children the chance to learn about the opposite sex (Family 9). The father from Family 7 also said how he could relate to one of the scenarios that included the father and son talking about sexual matters:

"I thought the part when father was driving and was discussing sex with his son was good; I related to that?" (father) ... "Yes, when we were coming back from football that night" (son).

Although this supports previous findings from the grounded theory analysis that suggested parents were more likely to discuss sexual matters when spending more time together the use of real and artificial characters was realistic to what occurs in real-life families. Parents also revealed how they wished that the multimedia program had been available when they

were younger as it provided the facts that they were not told about (families, 6, 7 and 9). However, the main comments that came from boys were that they liked the quiz because it gave the facts (Families 2, 5 and 11); buzzwords (families 9 and 10) and the fly (Families 10 and 17). Boys furthermore said how the intervention was “fun” and “educational” (Family 7) and that the virtual clinic was good because it taught them the most about the things they had not been told about (Families 11 and 17). This was supported by the son in Family 9, who stated:

“I think for me it was the way it was all laid out, it looked really smart and something that would appeal to young people. It also gives a lot of valuable information and advice” (son, Family 9).

Older boys and girls also said how they liked the scenarios, which included real people, as opposed to animations (Families 3, 6, 13 -16). Girls reported liking the quiz (Families, 3, 4 and 20); variety of sections (Family 6); buzzwords (Families 4, 12 and 20) and commented on how they thought the relationship section was good because it gave them an idea of how to behave in certain situations (Family 16).

Although there were a variety of statements to support parents and their children liking the multimedia some mothers (Families 7, 13 and 20) and children (Families 2, 11, 15 and 20) reported finding the fly “annoying” and “distracting”. In addition, mothers from Family 5, 12 and 18 found it difficult to manoeuvre between sections. However, these mothers related this to them not being computer literate and therefore their children had to show them and govern the computer controls when using the multimedia program. Parents and their children also commented on the age range at which the multimedia program would be most useful. Some parents agreed that the multimedia program should be used from the age of 9 to 11 years old (Families 4, 6 and 9) although the majority of parents thought it would be useful from the age of 12-13 years.

In essence, parents reported talking to their children about most sexual matters. However, mothers (families 12 and 16) reported that the sections on 'sexual fantasises' would be uncomfortable to discuss with their children. A Catholic mother (Family 5) reported that she would feel uncomfortable discussing aspects of the virtual clinic and contraception with her son only being 12 years old. Consequently, the mother had not talked to her 12-year old son about sexual matters as she felt he was too young. In other families where sexual matters were not discussed it was reported that boys (Families 10 and 11) and a girl (Family 19) would not discuss the content of the CD with their parents. Girls were furthermore found to feel uncomfortable discussing 'relationships' with their parents in great detail (Families 3 and 6) and a boy would not discuss ejaculating with his mother (Family 17) even though he talked to her about other sexual matters. The son did report that he had talked to his father about ejaculation and masturbation, however; it was in a joking way and related to someone else, and not the son directly. This once again supports how humour is used to discuss difficult aspect associated with sex. Children also commented on their preference for using the multimedia program as opposed to talking to their parents about sexual matters.

Some of the boys reported that they would use the multimedia program to find out the facts and then talk to their parents about what they had learnt to gain a better understanding (Families 2, 7, 13). Three boys said that they preferred to talk to their parents and friends rather than use the multimedia program (Families 9, 14 and 18), whereas the boys from families 5 and 10 would prefer to use the intervention because it would be too embarrassing to talk to their parents about sexual matters. However, the son in Family 5 reported that he was more likely to talk to his mother after participating in the study whereby they were encouraged to discuss sexual matters. Girls on the other had were found to prefer talking to their mother (Families 1, 4, 6, 9, 15, 16 and 20), whereas others said the same as some of the

boys in that they would use the intervention to learn the facts and then talk to their mother to gain a better understanding of the facts (Families 6, 7, 8, 12 and 13). However, the daughter in Family 19 reported that she would use the multimedia program to learn about sexual issues, but not discuss what she had learnt with her mother. In essence, the majority of the other children who participated in the study were found to want to use both the multimedia program and their parents to learn about sex (families 1, 2, 6-9, and 13). This was illustrated by the son and daughter in Family 8 who reported:

“Both” (son) ... “Yes it is good to get the facts from the CD but then also ask mum more about things to help me understand” (daughter).

A further quote to illustrate that children preferred to learn from parents and the multimedia program came from Family 9, who stated:

“I didn’t understand all of the words (son) ... “Yes, but that’s why we can go through the CD and talk about it as a family (mother) “Okay” (son) After exploring the multimedia program as a family ... “I understand a lot more now, even the long and unusual words in the drop-down menu. The CD has been really good and told you a lot; a lot of things I don’t think I would have learnt from school when looked at the factual information ... Mainly I talk to mum and dad about sex, but I liked it when we went through the CD together because it allowed me to ask questions that I wouldn’t have without the prompts on the CD” (son).

Although all of the family members reported that the multimedia program would act as a facilitator in removing barriers within families for not discussing sexual matters, Families 1, 4, 6-9, 12-16, and 20 claimed that it would not affect their family as they already talked openly about sexual matters within their own family. However, they felt that using the multimedia program had generated sexual conversations and given them an awareness of the sexual topics that they had not previously discussed. A good example to illustrate this came from Family 7:

“I think we have hit on most of it, but I just think it is a tool that should be used. We are lucky in that we have a close and open relationship; people can be close but not so open so I think the CD would help overcome a lot of hurdles” (mother) ... Yes, CONTRACEPTION, mother!” ... They both laugh ... “I thought we had but then when I think about it afterwards we have mainly only discussed the condom and not the pill ... I think it is just because I hadn’t thought the sexual act was close yet, so I hadn’t thought to discuss contraception with him. I mean we have discussed condoms, but not other contraception in relation to girls as well. I hadn’t thought he was at that stage; well I was hoping not (laughs). I mean I didn’t expect him to become a priest but I was hoping he would delay sex for a few more years at least, but no seriously I am pleased we have discussed contraception from both sexes, but that just goes to show how useful the CD has been to us. It may not have

reduced any barriers for discussing sex, but it has generated conversations so I can educate him and give him all the information that he wants and possibly needs in future, especially in relation to contraception” (mother). They both laugh, again.

The multimedia program was also found to increase children’s awareness of general SRE facts that relate to young people regarding contraception and where to access it (families, 3, 4 and 16). However, it was found that the multimedia program would not affect some family communications (families, 10, 11 and 19) as the family did not discuss sexual matters openly anyway through embarrassment factors. Although the multimedia program was not useful in removing barriers and increasing sexual matters being discussed in all families who participated in the study, in general parents felt that the resource could be good at facilitating sexual communication between them and their children. A quote to this effect came from the mother in Family 8:

“I think you being here has been really helpful, but I think we will also still be talking about aspects of the CD in the future.”

A further quote to illustrate the multimedia program as a facilitator for sexual communications in families came from Family 9:

“I think it would be good to generate conversations (father) ... “I think it would be helpful for families who can’t discuss sexual matters openly (mother).

These quotes have illustrated that the multimedia program has been a useful SRE resource for encouraging sexual communications within families. However, it was not only found to be beneficial for increasing the sexual-knowledge of children, but also parents. The mother from Family 4 highlighted how she had learnt about contraception from using the multimedia program:

“There were things on the CD that I did not know, so I think it is useful for parents to get the up-to-date information, especially with regards to where they can get contraception from. I think it would be good also for the things that sometimes as parents we forget about. I will have learnt a lot about the different things on the CD, but everyone forgets things, even parents.”

The comments provided by parents and their children were generally complementary towards the multimedia program. Because the multimedia program was a new resource at

the time of carrying out the research feedback was important to the authors of the resource. Therefore, the positive and negative comments from this research were given and feedback informed a new resource for future research and educational purposes for young children when learning about SRE topics. The findings from the pre-intervention post-intervention and follow-up sexual-knowledge questionnaire will now be provided to show the impact of the multimedia program on parents and children's knowledge and confidence in knowledge.

### **7.2.5 SEXUAL-KNOWLEDGE QUESTIONNAIRE FROM FAMILIES 1-20**

This section presents the results of the *sexual-knowledge questionnaire*. A  $2 \times (3)$  design was used with the independent variables of interview procedure (family interviewed together of separately) - used with independent measures - and time (pre-intervention, post-intervention and follow-up) - with repeated measures. There were two dependent variables: knowledge and confidence in knowledge. Therefore, a  $2 \times (3)$  mixed measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed. For the purpose of this analysis the results will be presented separately for mothers, fathers and children. Version 10 of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for data analysis and all statistical tests use a significance level of 0.05.

#### **7.2.6.1 FINDINGS FROM MOTHERS**

Table 9 shows that there were equal numbers of mothers at the three different stages of data collection when families were interviewed together and separately. The descriptive statistics of mothers' increase in knowledge are be presented for the 20 mothers who participated in the study.

Table 9

*Design for mothers*

| Procedure       | <i>Time</i>      |                   |           |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------|
|                 | Pre-intervention | Post-intervention | Follow-up |
| Family together | n = 10           | n = 10            | n = 10    |
| Family separate | n = 10           | n = 10            | n = 10    |

Table 10 shows that knowledge appeared to increase mostly between the pre-intervention and post-intervention stages of data collection. This was also the case with mothers who had been interviewed separately, although not to the same magnitude. However, by the follow-up stage of data collection all mothers appeared to have the knowledge to answer all questions correctly. Although the descriptive statistics highlight an apparent difference in correct score for mothers it is not clear whether there are equal variances of different scores; therefore the scores need to be assessed for the repeated-measure factor using the Mauchly's sphericity test. It was found that the test result was not significant,  $W = 0.85$ ,  $\chi^2(2) = 2.68$ ,  $p > 0.05$ . Therefore, it can be concluded that the assumption of sphericity has been met. A two-way mixed measures ANOVA (see Table 11) was conducted to assess the significance of the effect of the independent variables.

Table 10

*Descriptive statistics for knowledge (mothers)*

|                                | <i>Pre-intervention</i> | <i>Post-intervention</i> | <i>Follow-up</i> |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| Mothers interviewed together   |                         |                          |                  |
| Mean                           | 97.86                   | 100.00                   | 100.00           |
| SD                             | 3.50                    | 0.00                     | 0.00             |
| Mothers interviewed separately |                         |                          |                  |
| Mean                           | 96.43                   | 98.57                    | 100.00           |
| SD                             | 5.10                    | 4.50                     | 0.00             |

*Note.* Figures represent percentage of correct responses

Table 11

*ANOVA summary table – Knowledge (mothers)*

| <i>Source</i>           | <i>df</i> | <i>Sum of Squares</i> | <i>Mean Square</i> | $\varepsilon^2$ | <i>F</i> | <i>p</i> |
|-------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------|----------|----------|
| Interview procedure     | 1         | 13.61                 | 13.61              | 0.00            | 0.89     | 0.36     |
| Error (procedure)       | 18        | 275.51                | 15.31              |                 |          |          |
| Time                    | 2         | 88.44                 | 44.22              | 0.13            | 6.50     | <0.01    |
| Procedure $\times$ Time | 2         | 6.80                  | 3.40               | 0.00            | 0.50     | 0.61     |
| Error (time)            | 36        | 244.90                | 6.80               |                 |          |          |
| Total                   | 59        | 629.25                |                    |                 |          |          |

The two-way mixed-measures ANOVA showed that there was an effect of time,  $F(2,36) = 6.50$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . However, there was no effect of interview procedure,  $F(1,18) = 0.89$ ,  $p > 0.05$  or an interaction effect of procedure and time,  $F(2,36) = 0.611$ ,  $p > 0.05$ . The lack of an interaction effect indicates that the effect of interview procedure does not depend on the time at which the sexual-knowledge quiz was completed when using the intervention. It is also apparent that the means for the two different levels of the independent variable interview procedure do not differ. However, it can be concluded that there was an effect of time. Multiple-comparison tests with Sidak correction revealed that there was a significant difference between pre-intervention and post-intervention (mean difference = 2.14,  $p = 0.037$ ), and between pre-intervention and follow-up (mean difference = 2.86,  $p = 0.025$ ). However, the difference between post-intervention and follow-up was not significant ( $p > 0.05$ ).

Given that the two-way mixed-measures ANOVA for mothers has revealed that there was a significant result in knowledge between the different stages of using the intervention, it is important to examine the strength of association or *effect size* of the results. In ANOVA, the



effect size assesses the magnitude of the differences between the means and describes the *'amount of the total variance in the dependent variable that is predictable from knowledge of the levels of the independent variable'* (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996, p. 53). The most common effect size statistic is the  $\eta^2$  (eta squared), which represents the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that is explained for by the independent variable. According to Cohen (1988) 0.01 represents a small effect size, 0.06 a moderate effect size and 0.14 a large effect size. However,  $\eta^2$  is a biased estimate of the population variance and, as a less biased alternative,  $\varepsilon^2$  is recommended (Jaccard, 1998). It can be seen in Table 10 that  $\varepsilon^2 = 0.00$  for the independent variable interview procedure, represents a lack of effect and  $\varepsilon^2 = 0.13$  for the independent variable time represents a large effect, and  $\varepsilon^2 = 0.00$  for the interaction effect (interview procedure by time) which represents a lack of effect. In conclusion, this indicates that there was a lack of effect for procedure and the interaction effect, whereas there was a large effect size for independent variable time. However, it remains to be identified how confident the mothers were in the answers they gave when completing the questionnaire at the different stages of data collection.

Confidence in the answers given by mothers was analysed using exactly the same test procedure as knowledge. Table 12 shows that confidence appeared to increase in mothers mostly at the post-intervention and follow-up stages of data collection. This was not the case with mothers who had been interviewed separately as they appeared more confident in the answers they gave at the pre-intervention and post-intervention stages of data collection. The descriptive statistics also highlight that all mothers were answering the questions correctly by the follow-up stages of data collection and were almost 100% confident in the answers they gave. However, the descriptive statistics do suggest that the

intervention did have an effect on mothers' confidence as their knowledge increased regarding sexual matters.

Table 12

*Descriptive statistics for confidence (mothers)*

|                                | <i>Pre-intervention</i> | <i>Post-intervention</i> | <i>Follow-up</i> |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| Mothers interviewed together   |                         |                          |                  |
| Mean                           | 95.66                   | 96.67                    | 99.71            |
| SD                             | 3.50                    | 2.84                     | 0.90             |
| Mothers interviewed separately |                         |                          |                  |
| Mean                           | 94.68                   | 99.43                    | 99.57            |
| SD                             | 8.64                    | 1.81                     | 1.36             |

*Note.* Figures represent confidence as a percentage

A 2×(3) ANOVA (see Table 12) was conducted to identify if mothers' confidence increased as a result the intervention. Mauchly's sphericity test was assessed to identify if there were equal variances of different scores. For independent variable time, Mauchly's sphericity test statistic is  $W = 0.186$ ,  $\chi^2(2) = 28.633$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . Since the probability for time is not greater than 0.05 the assumption of sphericity has been violated and therefore the adjusted degrees of freedom (df) have to be used, using a correction needs to be applied. The Greenhouse-Geisser correction, adjusted df were 1.10 for time and the interaction effect and adjusted df were 19.84 for the error associated with time.

The 2×(3) ANOVA showed that there was an effect of time,  $F(1.10, 19.84) = 9.42$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . However, there was no effect of interview procedure,  $F(1,18) = 0.009$ ,  $p > 0.05$  or an interaction effect of procedure and time,  $F(1.10, 19.84) = 0.740$ ,  $p > 0.05$ . It can be seen in Table 12 that  $\epsilon^2 = 0.00$  for the independent variable interview procedure, represents a lack of effect and  $\epsilon^2 = 0.19$  for the independent variable time represents a large effect, and  $\epsilon^2 = 0.00$  for the interaction effect (interview procedure by time) which represents a lack of effect. It can be concluded that confidence increased over time. Multiple-comparison tests with Sidak

correction revealed that there was a significant difference between pre-intervention and post-intervention (mean difference = 3.88,  $p = 0.03$ ), and between pre-intervention and follow-up (mean difference = 4.47,  $p = 0.01$ ). However, the difference between post-intervention and follow-up was not significant ( $p > 0.05$ ).

Table 13

*ANOVA summary table – Confidence (mothers)*

| Source                  | <i>df</i> | Sum of Squares | Mean Square | $\varepsilon^2$ | <i>F</i> | <i>p</i> |
|-------------------------|-----------|----------------|-------------|-----------------|----------|----------|
| Interview procedure     | 1         | 0.23           | 0.23        | 0.00            | 0.00     | 0.93     |
| Error (procedure)       | 18        | 459.64         | 25.54       |                 |          |          |
| Time                    | 1.10      | 235.92         | 214.03      | 0.19            | 9.42     | <0.05    |
| Procedure $\times$ Time | 1.10      | 7.60           | 6.90        | 0.00            | 0.30     | 0.60     |
| Error (time)            | 19.84     | 450.60         | 22.70       |                 |          |          |
| Total                   | 41.04     | 1153.99        |             |                 |          |          |

Although it has been possible to analyse the sexual-knowledge questionnaire findings for mothers, only six fathers were involved in the research (four in Interviews 1-10 and two in Interviews 11-20). Therefore, only descriptive statistics are reported to show their knowledge and confidence for the answers they gave to the questions.

#### **7.2.6.2 FINDINGS FROM FATHERS**

Table 14 shows that there appears to be little difference of fathers' knowledge at the different stages of data collection. The descriptive statistics also highlight that although all fathers were answering the questions correctly by the follow-up stages of data collection, fathers from Interviews 11-20 were answering question correctly at the post-intervention stages of data collection. However, it is important to assess how confident fathers were in the answers they provided.

Table 14

*Descriptive statistics for knowledge (fathers)*

|                                | <i>Pre-intervention</i> | <i>Post-intervention</i> | <i>Follow-up</i> |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| Fathers interviewed together   |                         |                          |                  |
| Mean                           | 96.42                   | 98.21                    | 100.00           |
| SD                             | 5.06                    | 4.06                     | 0.00             |
| Fathers interviewed separately |                         |                          |                  |
| Mean                           | 98.21                   | 100.00                   | 100.00           |
| SD                             | 4.06                    | 0.00                     | 0.00             |

*Note.* Figures represent percentage of correct responses.

Table 15 shows that fathers' confidence appeared to increase mostly between the pre-intervention and post-intervention stages of data collection. This was not the case with fathers who had been interviewed separately as they appeared to be completely confident in all the answers that they gave at all stages of data collection. Furthermore, the descriptive statistics suggest that the intervention did have an effect on fathers' confidence as their knowledge increased regarding sexual matters. Although the results for parents' knowledge and confidence appear to be the same, it is important to consider the knowledge and confidence of the 25 adolescents who participating in this research.

Table 15

*Descriptive statistics for confidence (fathers)*

|                                | <i>Pre-intervention</i> | <i>Post-intervention</i> | <i>Follow-up</i> |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| Fathers interviewed together   |                         |                          |                  |
| Mean                           | 94.75                   | 100.00                   | 100.00           |
| SD                             | 4.92                    | 0.00                     | 0.00             |
| Fathers interviewed separately |                         |                          |                  |
| Mean                           | 100.00                  | 100.00                   | 100.00           |
| SD                             | 0.00                    | 0.00                     | 0.00             |

*Note.* Figures represent confidence as a percentage.

### 7.2.6.3 FINDINGS FROM CHILDREN

For children, the same aims regarding the sexual knowledge questionnaire apply as those of mothers and fathers: to assess knowledge and confidence when families were interviewed together or separately and to determine the effects of the different stages of data collection (pre-intervention, post-intervention and follow-up). A  $2 \times 2 \times (3)$  mixed measures ANOVA was conducted to assess knowledge and confidence of children. The additional variable was gender of child. Table 16 shows that there were more boys than girls at the three different stages of data collection from both Interviews 1-10 (family interviewed together) and Interviews 11-20 (family interviewed separately).

Table 16

#### *Design for children*

|                                 | <i>Pre-intervention</i> | <i>Post-intervention</i> | <i>Follow-up</i> |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| Children interviewed together   |                         |                          |                  |
| Male                            | n = 7                   | n = 7                    | n = 7            |
| Female                          | n = 6                   | n = 6                    | n = 6            |
| Children interviewed separately |                         |                          |                  |
| Male                            | n = 8                   | n = 8                    | n = 8            |
| Female                          | n = 4                   | n = 4                    | n = 4            |

Table 17 presents the descriptive statistics for adolescents' knowledge for those children who participated in Interviews 1-10 and Interviews 11-20. Table 17 shows that in Interviews 1-10 adolescents' knowledge appeared to increase mostly between the pre-intervention to post-intervention stages. However, when interviewed together, girls' baseline knowledge of sexual matters appeared to be higher than that of boys and girls. Table 17 also shows that by the follow-up stage of data collection all adolescents except for the boys who were interviewed with the whole family together appeared to have the knowledge from using the intervention to answer all questions correctly. These results suggest that the intervention did have a positive effect on knowledge of sexual matters of some adolescents. However, this is

not conclusive and a statistical test needs to be applied to identify if there was a significant difference in knowledge between the pre-intervention, post-intervention and follow-up stages and to identify the effects that gender had any effect on overall knowledge of adolescents.

Table 17

*Descriptive statistics for knowledge (children)*

| <i>Children - Family Interviewed Together</i>   |                          |                           |                   |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
|   | Males Pre-intervention   | Males Post-intervention   | Males Follow-up   |
| Mean  | 68.37                    | 81.63                     | 87.80             |
| SD  | 26.68                    | 28.52                     | 26.31             |
|   | Females Pre-intervention | Females Post-intervention | Females Follow-up |
| Mean  | 73.81                    | 90.48                     | 98.81             |
| SD  | 36.33                    | 7.38                      | 2.92              |
| <i>Children – Family Interviewed Separately</i> |                          |                           |                   |
|   | Males Pre-intervention   | Males Post-intervention   | Males Follow-up   |
| Mean  | 91.96                    | 96.43                     | 100.00            |
| SD  | 9.69                     | 5.40                      | 0.00              |
|   | Females Pre-intervention | Females Post-intervention | Females Follow-up |
| Mean  | 89.29                    | 98.21                     | 100.00            |
| SD  | 13.70                    | 3.60                      | 0.00              |

Mauchly's sphericity test was assessed to identify if there were equal variances of different scores. For the independent variable time, Mauchly's sphericity test statistic was  $W = 0.268$ ,  $\chi^2(2) = 26.35$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . Since test result is significant the assumption of sphericity has been violated.

The ANOVA results are presented in table 18. The three-way ANOVA showed that there was an effect on time,  $F(1.16, 24.25) = 11.19$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . However, there was no effect of interview procedure,  $F(1,21) = 3.61$ ,  $p > 0.05$  or gender  $F(1,21) = 0.054$ ,  $p > 0.05$ . Furthermore, none of the interaction effects were significant. However, it can be concluded that there was an effect of time with knowledge increasing over time. Multiple-comparison

tests with Sidak correction revealed that there was a significant difference between pre-intervention and post-intervention (mean difference = 10.83,  $p = 0.03$ ), between pre-intervention and follow-up (mean difference = 15.78,  $p = 0.004$ ), and between post-intervention and follow-up (mean difference = 4.95,  $p = 0.005$ ).

Table 18

*ANOVA summary table – Knowledge (children)*

| Source              | <i>df</i> | Sum of Squares | Mean Square | $\varepsilon^2$ | <i>F</i> | <i>p</i> |
|---------------------|-----------|----------------|-------------|-----------------|----------|----------|
| Interview procedure | 1         | 2742.24        | 2742.24     | 0.07            | 3.61     | 0.07     |
| Gender              | 1         | 291.04         | 291.04      | 0.00            | 0.38     | 0.54     |
| Procedure x Gender  | 1         | 335.11         | 335.11      | 0.00            | 0.44     | 0.51     |
| Error (BS)          | 21        | 15967.46       | 760.36      |                 |          |          |
| Time                | 1.16      | 3046.39        | 2638.576    | 0.10            | 11.19    | 0.002    |
| Procedure x Time    | 1.16      | 493.60         | 427.50      | 0.01            | 1.18     | 0.20     |
| Gender x Time       | 1.16      | 63.69          | 55.17       | 0.00            | 0.23     | 0.67     |
| Procedure x Gender  |           |                |             |                 |          |          |
| x Time              | 1.16      | 12.52          | 10.80       | 0.00            | 0.05     | 0.87     |
| Error (time)        | 24.25     | 5715.30        | 235.724     |                 |          |          |
| Total               | 53.89     | 28667.35       |             |                 |          |          |

Given that the mixed-measures ANOVA for children has revealed that there was a significant result of time on knowledge (through the different stages of using the intervention), it is important to look at the strength of association or effect size of the results.  $\varepsilon^2$  needs to be assessed to identify how much the independent variable, time can account for the variance in the dependent variable, knowledge. Table 18 shows that  $\varepsilon^2 = 0.10$ . According to Cohen (1988), this is a moderate to large effect size. However, it remains to be identified how confident the adolescents were in the answers they gave when completing the questionnaire at the different stages of data collection. Confidence of the answers given by adolescents was analysed using exactly the same test procedure as knowledge.

Table 19 shows that from the seven boys and six girls in Interviews 1-10 that their confidence increased mostly from the pre-intervention stage to the post-intervention stage of data collection. This was also the case with children who had been interviewed separately. However, it would seem that children from Interviews 11-20 had a higher level of confidence throughout taking part in the research, especially the girls who were 100% confident in the answers they gave at the follow-up stage of data collection. The descriptive statistics appear to suggest that the intervention did have an effect on adolescents' confidence as their knowledge regarding sexual matters increased.

Table 19

*Descriptive statistics for confidence (children)*

| <i>Children - Family Interviewed Together</i>   |                          |                           |                   |  |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|--|
|   | Males Pre-intervention   | Males Post-intervention   | Males Follow-up   |  |
| Mean  | 69.83                    | 78.78                     | 84.49             |  |
| SD  | 26.05                    | 30.57                     | 28.70             |  |
|   | Females Pre-intervention | Females Post-intervention | Females Follow-up |  |
| Mean  | 67.78                    | 87.33                     | 90.11             |  |
| SD  | 35.90                    | 15.70                     | 9.48              |  |
| <i>Children – Family Interviewed Separately</i> |                          |                           |                   |  |
|   | Males Pre-intervention   | Males Post-intervention   | Males Follow-up   |  |
| Mean  | 87.68                    | 94.06                     | 97.59             |  |
| SD  | 12.48                    | 7.42                      | 5.30              |  |
|   | Females Pre-intervention | Females Post-intervention | Females Follow-up |  |
| Mean  | 80.36                    | 90.55                     | 100.00            |  |
| SD  | 20.12                    | 13.42                     | 0.00              |  |

Mauchly's sphericity test was assessed to identify if there were equal variances of different scores. For independent variable time, Mauchly's sphericity test statistic was  $W = 0.354$ ,  $\chi^2(2) = 20.751$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . Therefore, sphericity assumption has been violated. A mixed-measures ANOVA (see Table 20) was conducted to identify if children's confidence increased when using the intervention. The three-way ANOVA showed that there was an



effect of time,  $F(1.20, 25.52) = 11.19, p < 0.05$ . However, there was no effect of interview procedure,  $F(1,21) = 2.70, p > 0.05$  or gender  $F(1,21) = 0.04, p > 0.05$ . Furthermore, none of the interaction effects were significant. It can be concluded that there was an effect of time on knowledge. Multiple-comparison tests with Sidak correction revealed that there was a significant difference within each pair of times: pre-intervention and follow-up (mean difference = 12.50,  $p < 0.001$ ), pre-intervention and follow-up (mean difference = 17.86,  $p < 0.001$ ) and between follow-up and post-intervention (mean difference = 15.78,  $p < 0.014$ ). Using Cohen's (1988) conventions for effect size, the effect size of time was moderate to large, with  $\epsilon^2 = 0.10$  (see Table 19).

Table 20

*ANOVA summary table – Confidence (children)*

| Source                       | <i>df</i> | Sum of Squares | Mean Square | $\epsilon^2$ | F     | P     |
|------------------------------|-----------|----------------|-------------|--------------|-------|-------|
| Interview procedure          | 1         | 2875.16        | 2875.16     | 0.05         | 2.70  | 0.12  |
| Gender                       | 1         | 37.369         | 37.69       | 0.00         | 0.04  | 0.85  |
| Procedure x gender           | 1         | 320.06         | 320.06      | 0.00         | 0.30  | 0.99  |
| Error (BS)                   | 21        | 521.53         | 1063.48     |              |       |       |
| Time                         | 1.20      | 3927.67        | 3231.84     | 0.11         | 20.80 | <0.00 |
| Procedure x Time             | 1.20      | 222.02         | 182.69      | 0.00         | 1.18  | 0.30  |
| Gender x Time                | 1.20      | 120.45         | 99.11       | 0.00         | 0.64  | 0.46  |
| Procedure x gender<br>x time | 1.20      | 64.58          | 53.14       | 0.00         | 0.34  | 0.61  |
| Error (time)                 | 25.52     | 3966.33        | 155.41      |              |       |       |
| Total                        |           | 12055.17       |             |              |       |       |

Although the results for the children showed that there was only an effect of time on knowledge and confidence and no effects of gender and interview procedure Pearson's correlation was calculated to assess whether age was associated with knowledge. The results are presented in Table 21.

Table 21

*Pearson's correlation of children's age with knowledge*

|                | <b>Age</b> | <b>Pre</b> | <b>Post</b> | <b>Follow</b> | <b>CPre</b> | <b>Cpost</b> | <b>CFollow</b> |
|----------------|------------|------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|----------------|
| <b>Age</b>     | 1.00       | .45*       | .17         | .26           | .43*        | .53**        | .42*           |
| <b>Pre</b>     |            | 1.00       | .69**       | .56**         | .89**       | .76**        | .70**          |
| <b>Post</b>    |            |            | 1.00        | .91**         | .67**       | .79**        | .90**          |
| <b>Follow</b>  |            |            |             | 1.00          | .52**       | .77**        | .90**          |
| <b>CPre</b>    |            |            |             |               | 1.00        | .86**        | .71**          |
| <b>Cpost</b>   |            |            |             |               |             | 1.00         | .91**          |
| <b>CFollow</b> |            |            |             |               |             |              | 1.00           |

\* p < 0.05 level (2-tailed) \*\* p < 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The positive correlation of age with knowledge was significant before the intervention only. The correlation of age with confidence was significant irrespective of time. The results suggest that the intervention removed the link between age and knowledge, as age was not a predictor anymore after the intervention. However, age remained a predictor of confidence in knowledge after the intervention.

Although the results have been provided to show the beneficial effects of the multimedia program when increasing knowledge and confidence within families, it is important to put them in the context of the overall study. This will now be given in the summary of the overall grounded theory findings and results that relate to the aims of the research.

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## **CHAPTER 8**

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### **SUMMARY OF GROUNDED THEORY FINDINGS**

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## **8.1. OVERVIEW**

Chapter 7 has provided the overall findings of the research. Chapter 8 now puts these in the context of each of the aims that correspond with the study.

### **AIM 1: IDENTIFY THE POTENTIAL FACILITATORS AND BARRIERS WITHIN FAMILIES FOR DISCUSSING SEXUAL MATTERS**

Some of the facilitators associated with discussing sexual matters had opposites that acted as barriers. It was found that the positive factors that contributed towards sexual communication also had a negative effect on sexual matters being discussed. For example, children's perception of their parent's knowledge acted as a facilitator and barrier. It was found that if children thought their parents were knowledgeable and could teach them this increased sexual communications within families. In contrast, if children perceived their parents to not know about sexual topics, then they would not ask their parent(s) questions, and consequently seek the SRE information elsewhere. This would make perfect sense in that people go to the source where they know they will get the information needed. For example, some children revealed that same-sex parents would be able to teach them the most because they have already had similar experiences and that parents would know more about sexual matters if it related to their occupation. This was demonstrated by children who perceived their mothers to be more knowledgeable if she was a nurse, whereas a father who was a butcher was regarded as 'thick' by his son, preventing sexual communications.

A further shared factor that acted as a facilitator and a barrier was siblings and other family members. Although younger brothers and sisters were found to disrupt sexual communications, older siblings and other family members such as, uncles and cousins were found to give children the sexual information needed. This shows that family members can and do act as a supportive network, which in turn forms a close

relationship and safe environment for sexual communications to occur. It was also found that a close and trusting relationship between parents and their children acted as a facilitator for sexual communications.

Parents who were open and honest about sexual matters with their children appeared to have a close and trusting relationship. This was reciprocated by children who were then more likely to talk to their parents about sexual matters seeing them as a role model and trusted companion. Although some parents claimed to not having the up-to-date knowledge to teach their children about sexual matters they still wanted to ensure their children have the sexual knowledge they needed. As a means of achieving this, parents would seek the information for themselves so they could educate their own children. It is understandable that when parents play this supporting role a closer relationship will be formed between parents and their children. Although these facilitators promote sexual communications within families, barriers were also revealed that hindered sexual matters being discussed.

Lack of parental knowledge has been highlighted for preventing sexual communications. However, this is amplified because it causes embarrassment within families. This not only applies to parents, but also children. Although parents equate this embarrassment to how they were taught by their own parents, children reported becoming embarrassed when parents asked personal questions about their private relationships. In one sense it is difficult for children to talk about their personal relationships if they do not have a close relationship or if they get embarrassed when talking about personal relationships with their parents. However, in another sense parents may ask questions to identify if their children need support or help in understanding what they are experiencing. In either case, it is important to realise that

the embarrassment felt is moving from one generation to the next, which could have implications when the children become parents themselves.

A final barrier to discussing sexual matters was dominant and controlling behaviour of parents. In the present study it was shown that if parents had these mannerisms, their children were shy and reserved, only giving socially desirable answers because they were uncomfortable to express themselves. Relating this to discussing sexual matters, it would come as no surprise that children may refrain from discussing sensitive issues associated with sex in case they were condemned or ridiculed by their parents for doing so. This may also have implications for the relationship children have with their parents in the future especially because children are not being provided with the knowledge that allows them to make responsible choices and decisions over their sexual health and personal relationships.

### **8.3. AIM 2: EXPLORE THE INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN WHEN DISCUSSING ASPECTS OF SRE DURING THE USE OF A SEX EDUCATION MULTIMEDIA PROGRAM**

In essence, positive interpersonal communication occurred in families where sexual matters were discussed openly. This was demonstrated in the examples given in Chapter 7, which showed the contrasting cases of positive and negative interpersonal communication in families. Although humour was often involved in families who discussed sexual matters openly, amusement helped break the ice when initiating sexual issues. Amusement then acted as a facilitator for further conversations of a sexual nature to be discussed at ease.

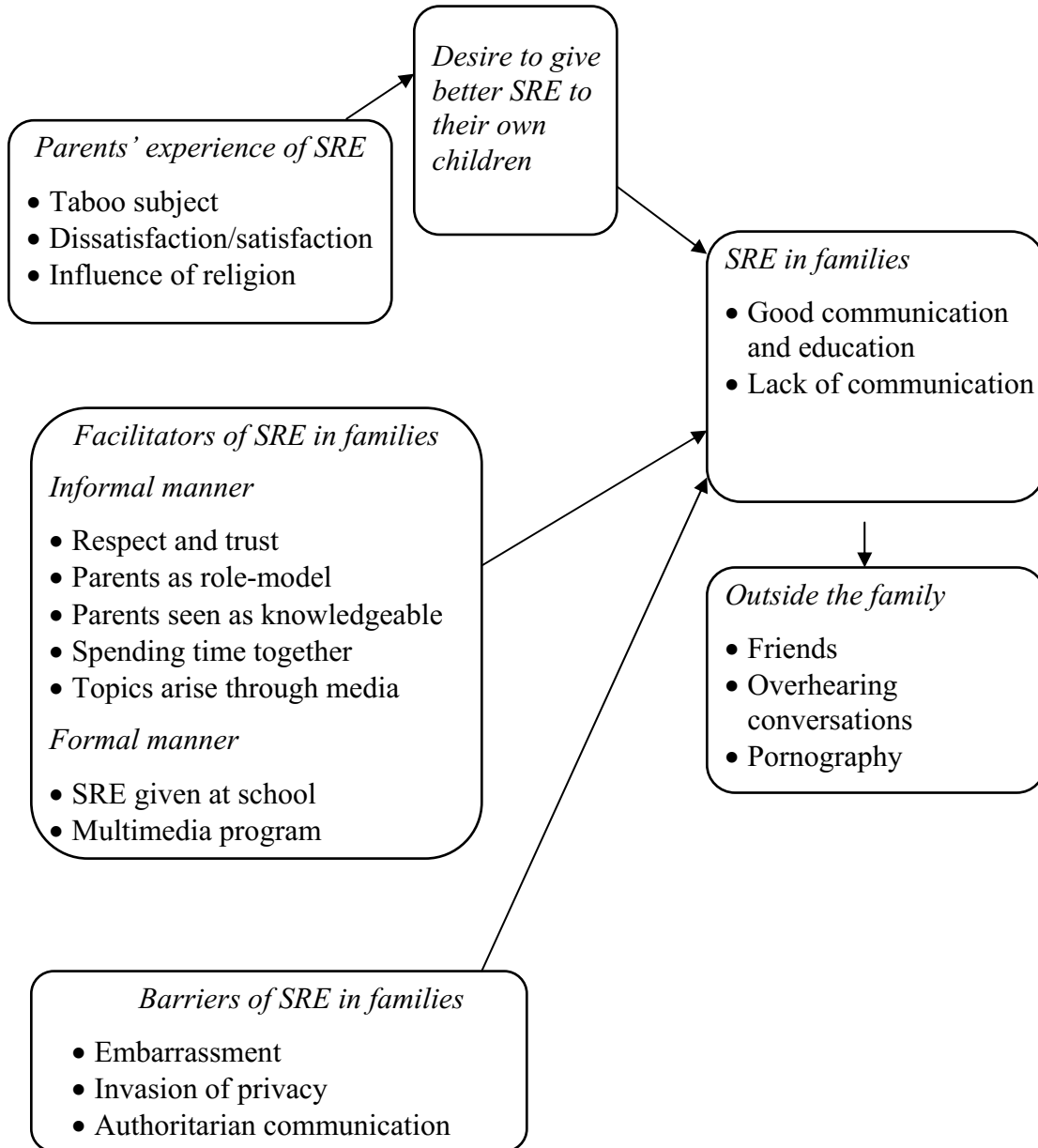
#### **8.4 AIM 3: EXAMINE THE EFFECTS OF THE MULTIMEDIA PROGRAM ON THE SEXUAL KNOWLEDGE AND CONFIDENCE OF PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN**

The present findings suggest that the multimedia program had an effect on both parents and children's knowledge (see Limitations of the Study in Chapter 9). The study also found that as knowledge increased through using the multimedia program, so did the confidence of parents and their children when answering the questions from the sexual-knowledge questionnaire. Although the multimedia program has been shown to be a beneficial resource in educating families about sexual matters, parents and their children also provided their personal views on the resource, including its usability, content and effectiveness.

#### **8.5. AIM 4: DEVELOP AN SRE COMMUNICATION MODEL FOR FAMILIES**

The grounded-theory model is presented in Figure 9. The model represents the *phenomenon of sexual communications within families*, which is related to discussions concerning sex and relationships. Based on the coding process of Strauss and Corbin's (1998) grounded-theory method (see Chapter 5), it demonstrates the following 18 components that were dimensionalised into the 5 categories. From an etic perspective these five categories reflect the main aims of the study and have been labelled as (1) sex education parents received, (2) SRE given to children, (3) facilitators and inhibitors for sexual communications within families, (4) good practice of sex education and (5) impact of the multimedia program on sexual conversations within families.





*Figure 11. Grounded Theory Model of Sexual Communication within families (Interviews 1-20)*

The model in figure 11 highlights the main categories and how they are linked to one another. However, an emic account will now be provided to show how the model was developed.

As shown in figure 11, parents experienced their own SRE as a taboo subject, they were mostly dissatisfied and they felt the constraining impact of religion on the

SRE given. Therefore, they desired better SRE for their own children. As a consequence, they aimed to provide better sexual communication and education to their children.

Various facilitators of SRE in families of a formal and informal nature were identified. Informal facilitators were spontaneous and not planned. These included respect and trust between parents and their children, seeing parents as a role model, children seeing their parents as knowledgeable, parents and their children spending time together, the occurrence of SRE topics in the media. Formal facilitators were deliberate and planned. In the current study, these include SRE given at school and the multimedia program. These facilitators led to good communication and education from parents to their children. Barriers of SRE in families included parents being embarrassed when discussing sexual matters with their children, invasion of privacy by parents asking personal questions of their children, parents' authoritarian communication style and presence of younger siblings who were found to disrupt communication regarding sexual matters. These barriers resulted in a lack of communication and education in families. When there was a lack of communication, children used other sources of information to educate themselves about sexual matters. These sources included friends, conversations that were overheard, and pornographic material.

Although Section 7.3 has detailed the effects of the intervention used for the purpose of this research it did demonstrate that the majority of families felt comfortable discussing sexual matters together. The multimedia program generated conversations that had not been previously discussed and was therefore beneficial, if

not a good facilitator, for providing good-quality sex education within the family home.

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## **CHAPTER 9**

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### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

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## **9.1. OVERVIEW**

In Chapter 4, four separate aims were stated. The research in this thesis has addressed each of these aims and a number of conclusions can now be drawn. Chapter 9 also aims to give an outline of the limitations of the research that has been undertaken and provide suggestions for future research in SRE communication within families.

## **9.2. CONCLUSIONS OF THE RESEARCH UNDERTAKEN**

One of the most important findings reported in this thesis is that the multimedia program was associated with an increase in the discussion of SRE topics within the majority of families. This was even so in families who had previously discussed sexual matters as contents of the multimedia program generated further conversations, adding to SRE topics that had already been discussed. This finding emphasises that parents can and do discuss sexual matters openly with their children and vice versa. However, these conversations were more likely to occur if (1) if parents shared hobbies and interests with their children such as, playing sports and watching television and (2) if children perceived their parents to have the sexual knowledge to teach them. However, the multimedia program had dual benefits in that it did not only contribute towards increasing family discussions, but it educated parents and their children about SRE topics. It was found that over the three different phases when knowledge was measured the sexual knowledge of parents and their children increased. This was mainly between the post-intervention phases and the follow-up phase when parents and their children had been given the opportunity to view the multimedia program as a family. Although the multimedia program was shown to be a beneficial resource when educating family members, negative influences within families were found to affect sexual communication.

The SRE communication model was developed to illustrate the positive and negative aspects that can affect SRE conversations within families. Although aspects of this model have already been discussed when referring to the other aims of the research in Chapter 8, a description will be provided to incorporate literature to support the findings, whilst also highlighting the contribution of this research in relation to developing an SRE communication model for in a family.

The SRE communication model shows that parents who talk to their children from a young age can allow for a closer and more trusting relationship to develop between them and their children. In addition, a close and trusting relationship allows for parents to influence their children's attitudes by forming beliefs and values concerning personal identity, relationships and intimacy (Novilla et al. 2006). This supports previous research which emphasises the valuable role parents can have when helping their children develop, grow and remain healthy (QCA, 2000; Novilla et al. 2006; Pike, 2006). However, parents who talk to their children about sexual matters confirms that parents can be the main sex educators regarding their children (Goldman & Bradley, 2004; Krafchick & Biringen, 2002). Although this research supports previous literature to suggest mothers are the main parent who discusses sexual matters with their children (Feldman & Rosenthal, 2000; Heisler, 2005; Lefkowitz et al. 2003; Lefkowitz et al. 2002; Lefkowitz et al. 2000; Lefkowitz, Sigman & Au, 2000; Miller, Dilorio & Dudley, 2002), there were different reasons for these conversations occurring. The present study found that mothers were the main care-givers who were responsible for supervising their children at mealtimes and after school. This was either because fathers were working or separated from the family. Although conversations about sexuality between mothers and their children were increased when

mothers are the main care-giver (Kirkman, Rosenthal & Feldman, 2001) and when they provide more supervision to their children when fathers were working (Danziger, 1995; DeVore & Ginsberg, 2005; Sonenstein & Pleck, 1993), the present research contradicts previous findings in the literature to suggest fewer parent-child conversations occur in single-parent families (Whitbeck, Simons & Kao, 1994). However, it was found that in some families where there were dual parents, discussions did occur. This type of good-quality parenting has been reported to be effective because it allows parents to facilitate what their children learn at the different stages of their lives where they are able to provide their children with the knowledge and skills to meet their full potential on the transition to adulthood (Berger, 1987; Bradley & Matsukis, 2000; Fine & Lee, 2001). However, it was found that dialogues between same-sex parents and children can be enhanced when they share an activity or when spending time together. This has been supported in previous literature, in the sense of the importance of the offering of secure environment for sexual matters to be discussed (Jewell, Tacchi & Donovan, 2000; McCulloch, 2000). The study found authoritarian parents did not have this type of relationship with their children. The majority of interactions between parents and their children allowed for friendships to develop, which were based on intimacy, trust, mutual understanding and concern for each other (Hartup, 1996). The present research supported these findings especially between mothers and daughters, and fathers and sons. Other findings which were supported were that mothers talk to their daughters more than their sons (Dilorio, Kelley & Hockenberry-Eaton, 1999; Halstead & Waite, 2002; King & Lorusso, 1997; Parera & Joan-Carles, 2004; Pluhar & Kuriloff, 2004) and that fathers talk to their sons more than with their daughters (Cardwell, Wright, Zimmerman, Walsemann, Williams



et al, 2004; Dilorio, McCarty & Denzmore, 2006; Halstead & Waite, 2002; Lehr, Demi, Dilorio & Facticeau, 2005).

Religion affected how some families discussed sexual matters. This was mainly in parents who did not have the knowledge and were consequently embarrassed to discuss sexual matters with their children based on how they were taught when they were younger. This finding supports previous research to suggest that embarrassment can be a factor when not talking openly (Burgess, Dziegielewski, Evan-Greens, 2005; Dilorio, Hockenberry-Eaton, Maibach, Rivero et al. 1996; Feldman & Rosenthal, 2000; Kahlbaugh, Lefkowitz, Au & Sigman, 1997; King & Lorusso, 1997; Lefkowitz, Kahlbaugh, Au & Sigman, 1998; Rosenthal & Feldman, 1999; Jordan, Price & Fitzgerald, 2000; Kakavoulis, 2001; Walker, 2001). It also reinforces that abstinence-only education is ineffective and discriminatory because it does not provide people with the essential sex education needed for developmental aspects of life (Santelli et al. 2006). However, since religion was found to be on the decline in the younger generation (ONS, 2004) parents claimed that it was more important that their children were given the correct information regardless of religion. Hence, the influence of religion appears to be weaker than when parents were younger. However, some parents would still send their children to Catholic schools because of the belief that their norms and values would be reinforced.

Parents reported to be dissatisfied with their own sex education when they were younger. However, they were determined to break this cycle by talking to their children about sexual issues. A variety of factors contributed towards sexual communication, the main one being the media.

It is widely acknowledged that people learn from the media, this research in particular found that both boys and girls learnt about sexual matters through watching television. In addition, girls would learn about sexual matters through reading magazines, and boys would mainly learn by using computers, via accessing the Internet. However, the question remains what are children learning from these sources, especially considering previous literature that suggests magazines promote sexual images that shape young people's attitudes (Baker, 2005; Boynton, 2003; Chow, 2004; Gysels, Pool & Nyanzi, 2005; Kaplan & Cole, 2003; Kim & Ward, 2004; Welles, 2005) and that the Internet shows sexually explicit material (Haggstrom-Nordin, Sandberg & Hanson, 2005).

Although the Internet has been found to be engulfed with pornographic material and seductive images (Richardson, 2009), computers have been shown to be purposeful in educating young people about sexual matters (Alemi, Cherry & Meffert, 1989; Bay-Cheng, 2001; Fong, Zanna & Elton-Marshall, 2006; Gilbert, Temby & Rogers, 2005; Goold et al. 2006; Gray, Klein, Noyce, Sesselberg & Cantrill, 2005; Keller & La Belle, 2005; Paperny & Starn, 1989; Starn & Paperny, 1990; Yom & Lee, 2005). In the present investigation a multimedia program was used which unlike the Internet, provides children with sexual facts and sexual information needed to make informed choices over their sexual relationships and sexual behaviour. The intervention with the multimedia program showed to enhance and influence SRE conversations between parents and their children, it also showed to increase knowledge.

Older siblings were identified to influence young people's sexual behaviour based on their increased knowledge and experience; the finding supports the results of

previous research (Kim, McHale, Crouter & Osgood, 2007; McHale, Whiteman, Kim & Crouter, 2007; Shortt, Capaldi, Dishion, Bank & Owen, 2003; Tucker, McHale & Crouter, 2008). This is especially so regarding what younger siblings learn from older brothers and sisters who have a close friendship (Kramer & Kowal, 2005). However, in this study it was reported that younger siblings could be a distraction. To overcome these problems parents and children claimed to finding an appropriate time at a later date when they could be alone. Although this was found to be the case in a few families, it emphasises how adaptive family members can be when helping and supporting each other. However, it has implications in that communication is still broken and has consequences for resuming conversations.

The findings from this study show that developments have occurred over the decades regarding how families communicate sexual matters. However, according to some parents, the multimedia program would not affect how they discussed these. Although this was found in only a few families, this claim contradicts the actual demonstrated effects of the multimedia program on what they learnt, especially as knowledge and confidence of parents and children increased by participating.

### **9.3. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Although this investigation has raised important issues that are related to SRE in British families, limitations exist relating to the findings. A first limitation relates to the use of different research methods within the research. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were employed, providing a triangulation method to collect the data. Triangulation occurred by using the qualitative method of grounded theory to conduct in-depth interviews, in addition to other methods. This allowed for a model to be developed to illustrate the barriers and facilitators of sexual

communication within families whilst using an SRE multimedia program. The quantitative aspect of this research then used questionnaires to assess increase in knowledge when using the multimedia program and the effectiveness of communicating in removing barriers for SRE communication within families. Although the triangulation method has been supported for strengthening and complimenting research findings because it serves the purpose of confirmation (Denzin, 1970; Guba, 1981; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Schwandt & Halpern (1988) and completeness (Jick, 1983) of data it has been criticised by other social researchers. This is mainly because it does not reduce bias and improve validity (Fielding & Fielding, 1986), nor does it imply there is only one true social reality (Silverman, 1985; Guba & Lincoln, 1989). It has therefore been suggested that researchers need to select one appropriate method to measure and describe data (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) and avoid using opposing epistemological and ontological assumptions to explain theories and methods (Blaikie, 1991). Although there are criticisms associated with most, if not all, research designs, the triangulation method used in the present investigation was beneficial. This was particularly so in that it provided an innovative way to understanding the phenomena of sexual communications within families, and revealed unique findings in the under-researched field of SRE in British families, especially in relation to how they communicate sexual matters.

Although an explanation has been provided relating to the limitations of the methods employed in this study, a second limitation relates to not having a control group to assess the overall effectiveness of the multimedia program. Because participants may have been exposed to many different things that could change their perspective on how they as families discuss sexual matters (e.g. the researcher, family

discussions and interviews) the study did not include a control group as a means of assessing the actual impact or effectiveness of the intervention. This limitation could be overcome by randomly assigning participants to a treatment group that used the multimedia program and a control group (not using the program). This would have allowed for an equal chance of each participant to use the multimedia program to assess its overall impact upon family communications regarding sexual matters. Employing a control group would have allowed for assessment to be made as to how beneficial the multimedia program was for acting as an educational tool for facilitating sexual communications within families.

A third limitation refers to the ambiguities in human language and how people use different terminology to describe meanings. For example, in Interview 2, a male adolescent referred to someone as gay. This term can be construed to mean one of three things: (1) homosexuality, (2) carefree and merry or (3) bright and cheerful. It was therefore important for the researcher to be aware of the different ambiguities in terminology that people may have referred to regarding sexual matters. In order to overcome this limitation the researcher was careful and alert as to the different sexual terminology that could have been used, and - where necessary - clarity was gained to exact the precise meanings of participants.

A fourth limitation of the present study relates to how participants were recruited to participate in the interviews. Since much information was required to develop an overall view of how British families discussed sexual matters, several families were needed. Although it was not a deliberate act on the researcher's part, families introduced other families to participate in the present investigation, resulting in snowball sampling. Demographically this led to the participation of 12 Catholic, and

only 8 Church of England families. Although this could potentially sway the results, parents who were Catholic reported to not imposing their Catholic beliefs on their children. This was reinforced in interviews with adolescents from Catholic families who claimed not to be part of any particular religion, even if their parents were. It was, however, more important to parents and their children that good-quality sex education was given, regardless of religion. However, it has to be accepted that some religious influences may have impacted on the lack of information parents gave to their children because of how they were taught by their own parents, and the restrictions of the sex education provided by Catholic schools, which could affect children's knowledge.

A final limitation of the present study relates to how the corpus analysis and its findings can be extended to the wider population. This is firstly due to the research being conducted and confined to a small area of the North-East of England. Secondly, the qualitative data of the research were not subject to statistical analysis and therefore conclusions qualified with a particular level of probability are not possible as with quantitative analyses. However, due to employing a triangulation method to describe the quantitative and qualitative analyses this has provided a multidimensional perspective of the phenomena, which is laden with rich data that can be interpreted with a degree of confidence.

#### **9.4. FUTURE RESEARCH**

Future research may consider investigating communication in relation to discussions in families concerning sexual matters that incorporate some type of outcome measures that can be generalised. Although there are many definitions of communication, there is still much discussion as to what actually constitutes communication when

understanding the process by which people interact and assign meaning (Littlejohn and Foss, 2008). This is exemplified by the work of Greek Philosophers Socrates, Plato and Aristotle who were the first to address language and communication several hundreds of years ago. However, because communication has deep roots associated with human behaviour and structures within society, disciplines such as psychology, sociology and philosophy need to consider to arrive at a paradigm that can explain the true nature of communication. This could be achieved by developing a communication framework that is embedded in theory by using ontological and epistemological approaches. Organising and developing theory in this way would incorporate the true nature of reality from a realist, normanalist and social view point, whereby phenomena can be studied to systematically examine causal relationships. Although social psychologists such as Robert Bales (1950) have made attempts to develop a communication model that considers small-group decisions, more recent researchers have given consideration to how individuals in groups propose solutions to problems (Scheidel & Crowell, 1964; Hoffman, 1979). This is in line with other research that has looked at the inclusion of *augmentation theory* in group decisions (Hirokawa, 1985; Meyers & Brashers, 1998), *autokinetic effect* and *conformity* in relation to social influence within groups (Sherif, 1935; 1956), *group polarisation* and *social comparison theory* in group decisions (Wallach, Kegan & Bem, 1962; Baron, Dion, Baron & Miller, 1962), and *persuasive arguments theory* in group decisions (Vinokur & Burnstein, 1974; Strasser & Titus, 1985). This variety of research mainly demonstrates the ambiguity in trying to develop a communication model that can explain how people interact and how we assign meaning across a range of situations and context. Previous research is also mainly concerned with group decisions, which

exclude family networks in communication, therefore reinforcing the need to develop a communication model that is informed by relevant disciplines and situations that can explain all phenomena.

## **9.5. CONCLUDING STATEMENT**

Undoubtedly, sexual knowledge is essential if children are to have the intelligence to make informed choices and decisions over their personal relationships and sexual behaviour. Although parents can have a big influence over their children, and their behaviour, schools have a responsibility to provide effective SRE to meet the needs of *all* children. Although this needs to complement the day-to-day sexual advice through unconscious teaching and nurturing of parents, a collaborative approach needs to be taken by schools to ensure parents are better informed of the SRE provided and when it is taught. Parents are then better equipped to educate themselves by using resources such as a multimedia program in preparation for questions that may be raised by their children, so parents can educate them further. A partnership like this can only be of benefit, especially to young people if they are to develop into healthy adults with the skills to be confident, responsible and comfortable with their own sexuality and sexual choices. In essence, children need to be encouraged to ask questions, discuss their feelings and their sexual thoughts from a young age without criticism, condemnation or embarrassment. This could be helped by parents having the sexual knowledge and skills to be able to talk to their children and by parents being willing to approach the subject of sex without embarrassment and fear of not having the correct information to educate their children. Communication between schools and parents regarding the sex education taught should also be enhanced. If these steps are taken, they could contribute towards sexual topics being discussed openly within families as they are in



society as a whole, especially when using the SRE communication model presented in this thesis.

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## **APPENDIXES**

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# **APPENDIX 1**

## **Consent Form**

School of Social Science & Law  
University of Teesside  
Borough Road  
Middlesbrough  
Tees Valley  
TS1 3BA



Dear family,

I would like to ask you all as a family to participate in the research study entitled "*Psychosocial Exploration of Sex & Relationship Education in the Family Context Using the Grounded Theory*". The purpose of this study is to explore the effects of the use of and educational CD-ROM in a family setting on the communication of sexual issues among family members.

***What the study involves?*** Initially parent(s) and their child(ren) will be given a form to complete before being asked some general questions on how and what they discuss on sexual matters within the family. Families will then be given a quiz before and after exploring the CD-ROM. Families will then be asked to express their views on the CD and its usefulness in sex and relationship education. Use will be made of audio equipment for further analysis.

***Participation.*** Taking part in this study is completely voluntary and the information will be kept strictly confidential. If you and your son/daughter decide to withdraw from the study, you are free to do so at any time. This research study has been approved by the ethics committee at the University of Teesside and furthermore complies with the Code of Practice of the British Psychological Society (Professional body for Psychology).

***Questions?*** If you have any questions at a later date after the research study please feel free to contact Triage Turnbull by letter at University of Teesside, School of Social Sciences & Law, Borough Road, Middlesbrough, Tees Valley, TS1 3BA or via phone on 07737 892174.

May I just take this opportunity to thank you in advance for your time and your much appreciated participation in this research study.

---

Please read the following paragraph. If you agree to participate please sign below.

I understand that any information given by me and/or my son's/daughter's will be kept strictly confidential and will be used for the purpose of this research study.

Parent (1) signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent (2) signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Young person (1) signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Young person (2) signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Thanks for all your time and co-operation in this research study.

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Demographic questionnaire for parents**



**1) Name and Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**2) Is your home:** Detached/ Semi-detached/ Terraced/ A Flat

**3) Which of the following qualifications do you have?**  
 No Qualifications .. NVQ .. O levels .. A levels .. First Degree .. Higher Degree ..

**4) Sex:** Male/ Female **5) Age:** \_\_\_\_\_ **6) Marital status:** \_\_\_\_\_

**7) Your occupation:** \_\_\_\_\_

**8) How would you describe your origin? The following categories are taken from the 2001 census.**

**a) White:**  
     British  
     Irish  
     Any other white background? Please state. \_\_\_\_\_

**b) Mixed:**                      White/ Black Caribbean  
     White/ Black African  
     White/ Black Asian  
     Any other mixed background? Please state. \_\_\_\_\_

**c) Asian/Asian British**  
     Indian  
     Pakistani  
     Bangladeshi  
     Any other Asian background? Please state. \_\_\_\_\_

**d) Black/Black British**  
     Caribbean  
     African  
     Any other Black background? Please state. \_\_\_\_\_

**e) Chinese or other ethnic group**  
     Chinese  
     Any other? Please state \_\_\_\_\_

**9) Religion:** \_\_\_\_\_

**10) Number of children and gender:** \_\_\_\_\_

**11) Name and age of child(ren) participating in the research:**  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**12) Gender of child(ren) participating in the research:**

---

**13) Name of school child(ren) attend:** \_\_\_\_\_

**14) How old were you when having your first child?** \_\_\_\_\_

**15) What sex education did you receive when attending school?**

**At primary level**

---

---

**At secondary level**

---

---

**16) What age was this sex education initially given?**

---

**17) Did you find this sex education adequate in informing you about sexual matters and relationships?**

---

**18) Who did you mainly talk to about sexual matters when you were your child's age?**

---

**19) Were your parents invited to take part in the sex education you received?**

---

**20) Do you think parents should have more involvement within the schools when teaching sex education to their child(ren)?**

---

**21) Are you aware of the different initiatives that are being used within school to teach your child(ren) about issues associated with sex?**

---

**22) Do you know what sex education is offered to your child(ren) within the school setting?**

---

**23) Are there any issues associated with sex that you would prefer your child not be taught?**

---

**24) Were you asked whether you wanted your child(ren) to be taught the sex education they receive at school?**

---

**25) Have you seen the sex education policy from your child(ren) school, which indicates what sex education is being delivered to your child?**

---

**26) What aspects do you think are the most important when teaching your child(ren) about issues associated with sex? Name the top 5 to 10.**

---

---

**27) What age do you think your child(ren) should begin being taught about sexual matters within the school setting?**

---

**28) Do you think your child(ren) should be offered more sex education than is being delivered?**

---

**29) Do you think your child(ren) should be offered less sex education than is being delivered?**

---

**30) Who do you think your child(ren) talks to most about issues associated with sex?**

---

**31) Do you think your child(ren) uses computers to educate themselves about matters associated with sex?**

---

**32) Do you think your child(ren) may read adult sex material to find out more about sex?**

---

**33) Do you think your child(ren) uses the media to educate themselves about sex and relationships?**

---

**34) Are there any television programmes your child(ren) watches that contain matters associated with sex and relationships?**

---

**35) Are you satisfied with the sexual messages being passed onto your child(ren) via the media?**

---

**36) Does your child(ren) talk to you about the sexual messages that they have seen on the television or in the media?**

---

**37) What sex education have you given your child(ren) within the home setting?**

---

**38) Has this being prompted by you or your child(ren)?**

---

**39) Do you think your child(ren) receives a better standard of sex education than you did when you were at school?**

---

**40) Do you feel that if you had received the sex education that you would like your child(ren) to have that you may have made different sexual decisions with your life?**

---

**41) If yes, what decisions do you think you would have made differently?**

---

---

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **Demographic questionnaire for children**

1) Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ 2) Age: \_\_\_\_\_

3) What sex education have you received at school and who delivered it?

At Primary level

---

At secondary level

---

4) What were you told about?

---

5) Do you think this is enough or would you like to be taught more sex education?

---

6) After the sex education you received, were you still left wanting to know more?

---

7) What age do you think sex education should start to be taught?

---

8) How often was sex education taught (e.g. weekly, monthly, etc)?

At primary level

---

At secondary level

---

9) Was this taught by a teacher or from someone outside the school?

---

10) Do you prefer for a teacher to or someone else to teach you about sex within the school setting?

---

11) Please explain why you prefer sex education to be taught by this person/agency?

---

12) What sex education initiatives are used to teach you about sex within the school setting (e.g. Roadshows, etc)?

---

**13) How would you like sex education to be taught?**

---

**14) Do you use computers to learn about sexual matters?**

---

**15) If yes, is this via**

**Computer games ... Internet ... Other: (Please state) \_\_\_\_\_**

**16) Do you read any adult magazines to educate yourself about sex?**

---

**17) Do you learn from television programmes that contains sex education matters?**

---

**18) Do you think you learn a lot about sex through the media (e.g. teen magazines, soaps, etc)?**

---

**19) Do your parents talk to you about sex?**

---

**20) If yes, which parent?**

---

**21) Do you feel comfortable talking to your parents about sexual matters?**

---

**22) Do you feel embarrassed talking to your parents about sex?**

---

**23) Do you talk to friends about sex?**

---

**24) If yes, what do you and your friends talk about?**

---

**25) Do many of your friends have boyfriends/ girlfriends?**

---

**26) Do you have a boyfriend/ girlfriend?**

---

**27) Do you know if your friends talk to their boyfriend/ girlfriend about sex?**

---

**28) Do you talk to your boyfriend/ girlfriend about sex?**

---

**29) If yes, what sorts of things do you and your boyfriend/ girlfriend talk about?**

---

**30) Who do you prefer to talk to about sex (e.g. parents, friends, boyfriend, girlfriend, etc)?**

---

**Please answer the following two questions before answering the next questions that relate to the sex & relationships education you receive in the school you attend.**

**Which school do you attend?**

---

**31) How important is it for this school to provide you with sex & relationships education (SRE)?**

Very important    Quite important    Not very important    Not important at all

**32) How would you ‘rate’ the SRE you already receive whilst at this school?**

Very Good

Good

Okay

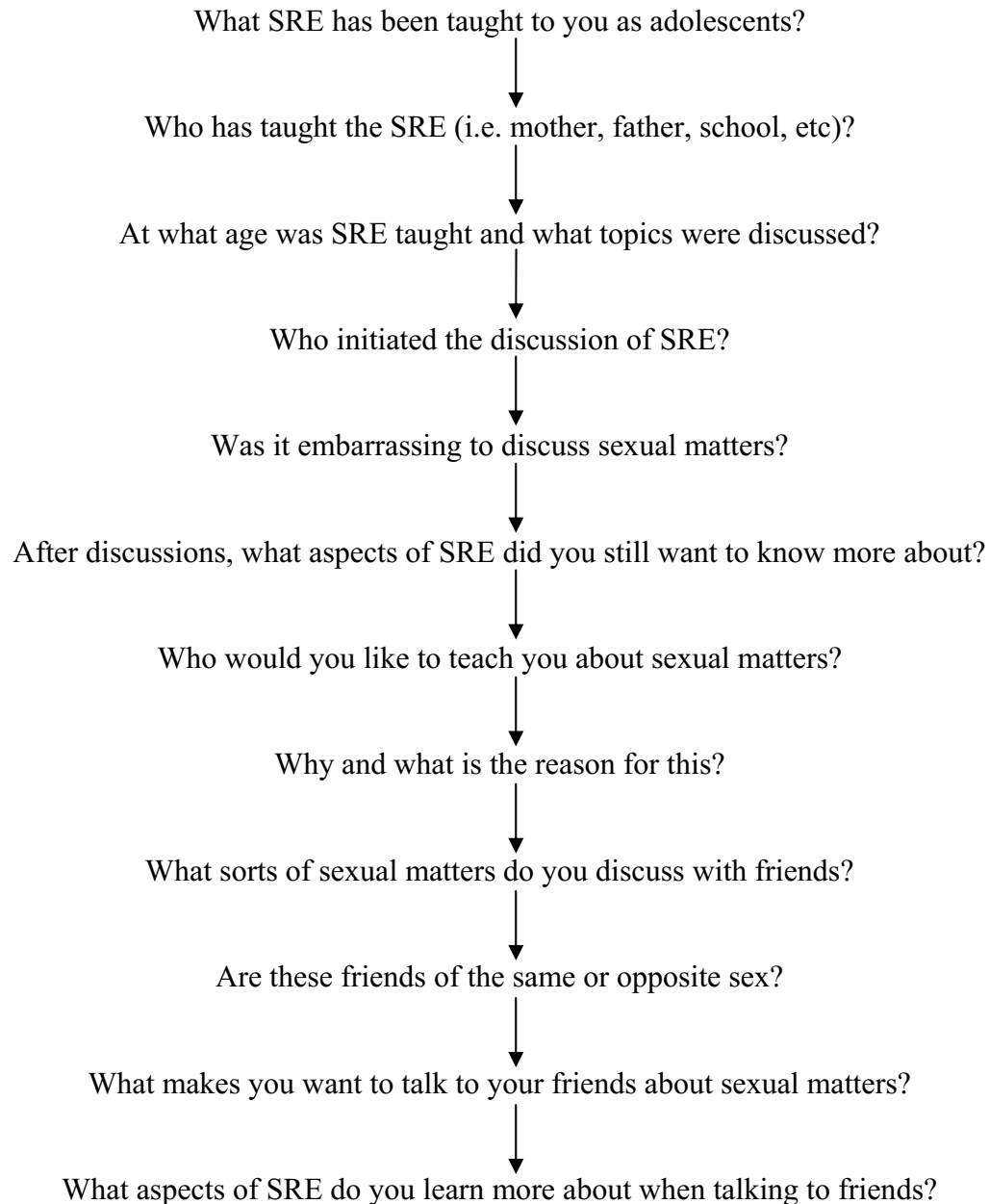
Poor



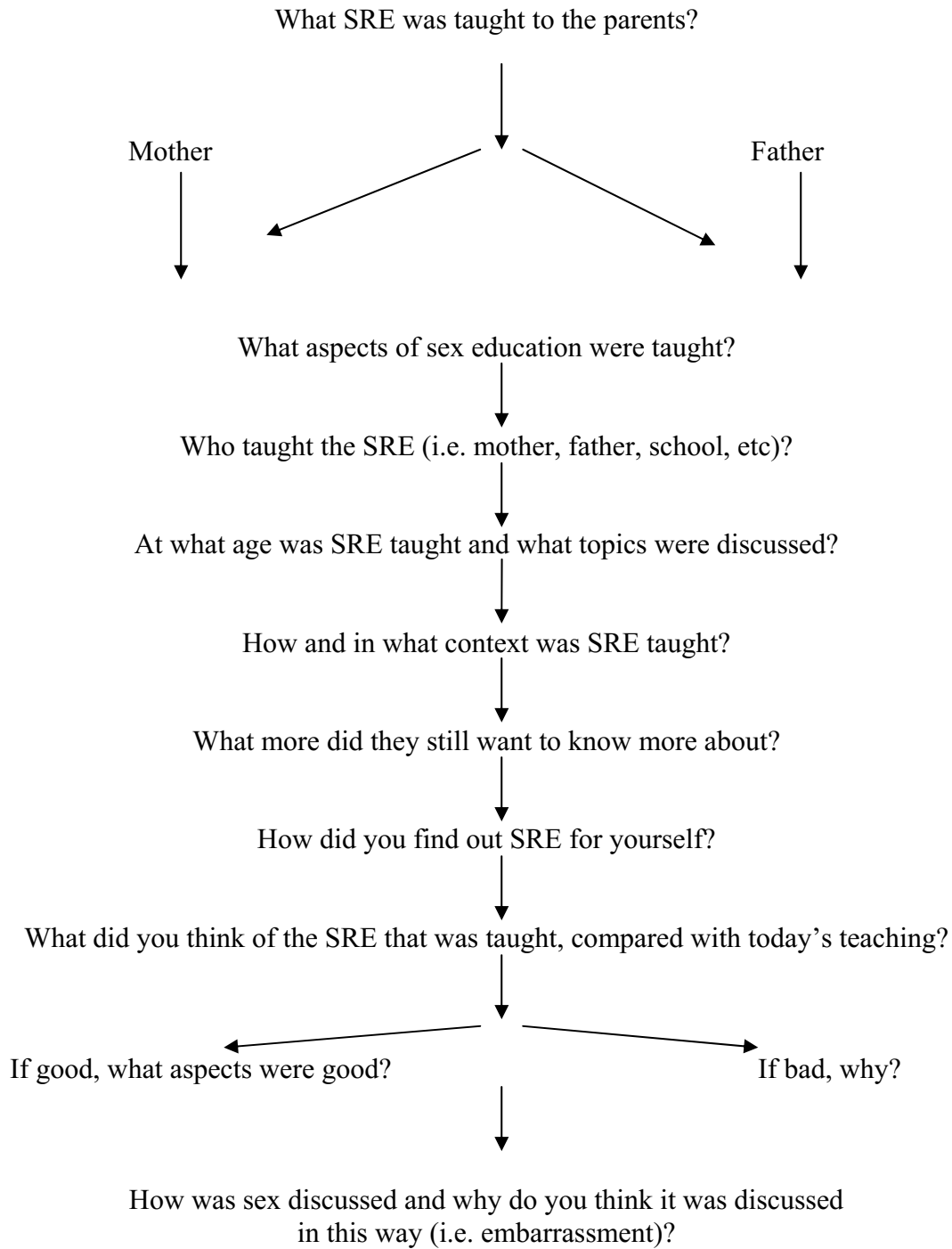
## **APPENDIX 4**

### **Proforma of questions asked to parents and their children when together**

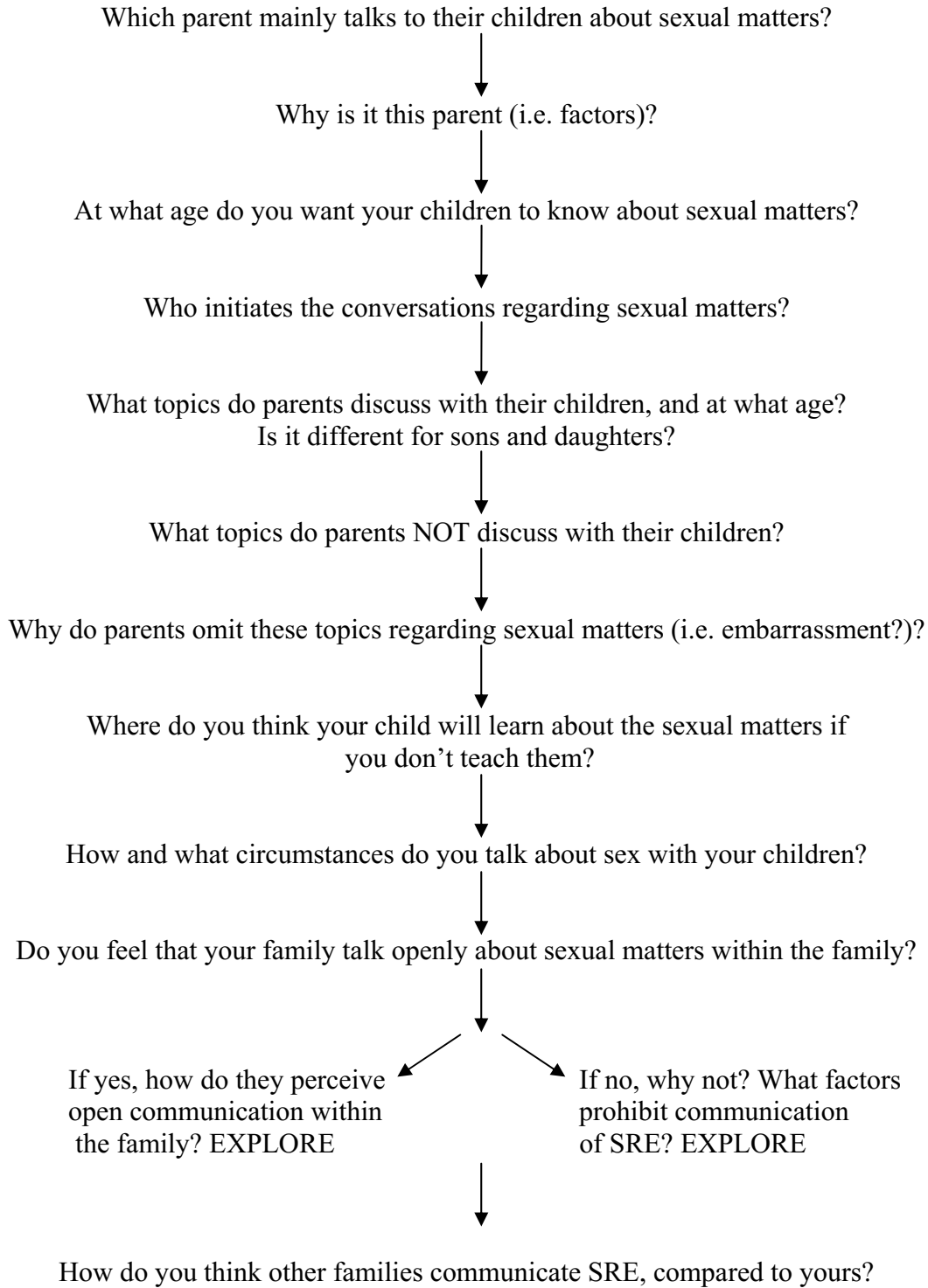
## **SRE taught to adolescents**



## SRE taught to parents



## **Parental communication of SRE with their children**



## **Media impact on SRE within the family**

What main forms of the media (computers, magazines, etc) do adolescents use to learn about issues regarding SRE?



What sorts of things do you learn from these sources that you do not get taught about elsewhere?



Do you prefer to use these sources to learn about SRE?



If so, why?



What impact do you think the media (computers, magazines, etc) have on adolescents regarding the SRE that they learn?



Do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing?



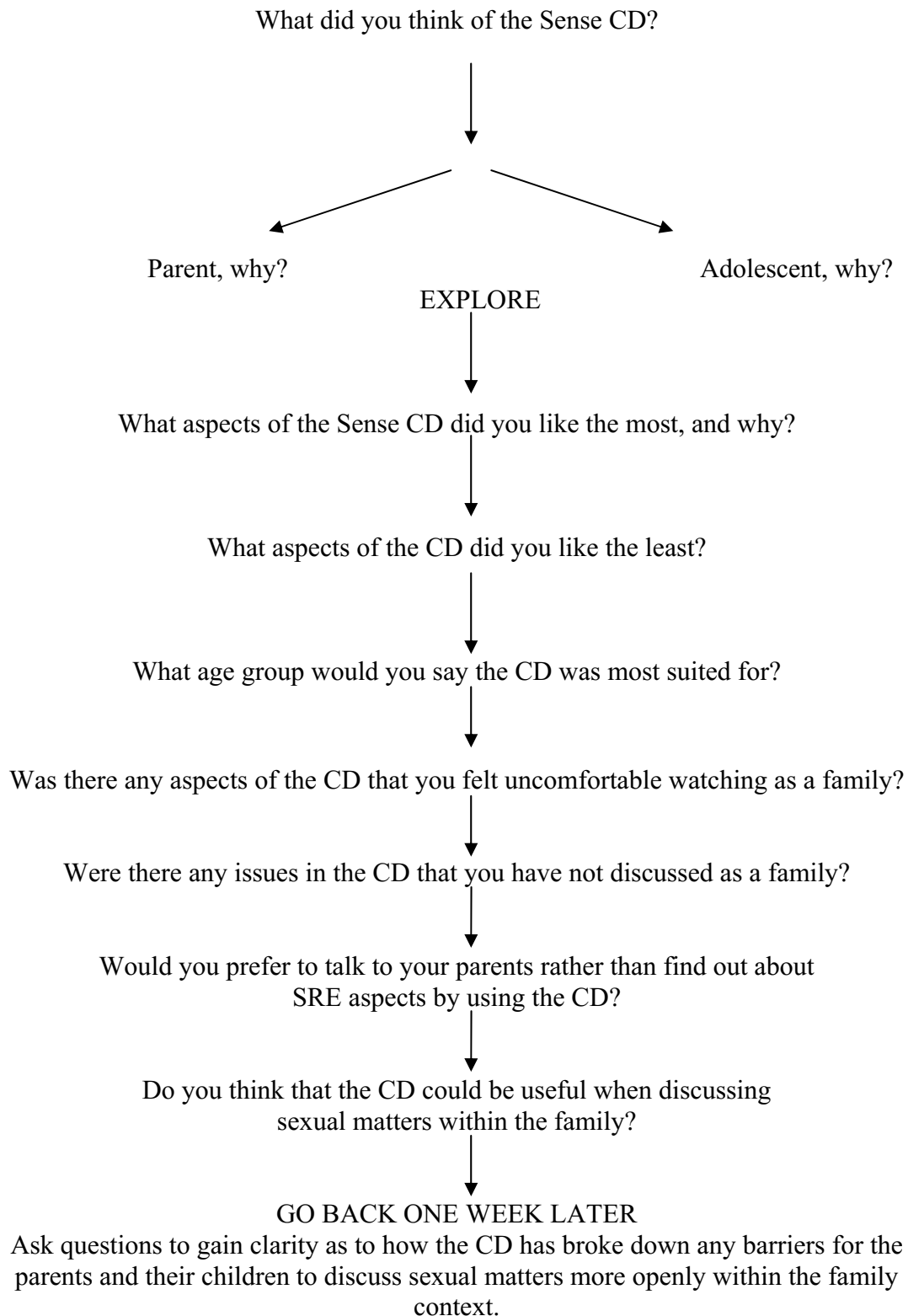
Good thing, why?

Bad thing, why?

EXPLORE



## Impact of the Sense, Sex and Relationship on reducing barriers for discussing SRE



## **APPENDIX 5**

### **Progression of questions asked to parents and children when interviewed together**

## Interviews 1 & 2

### ADDITIONAL QUESTION FOR PARENT(S):

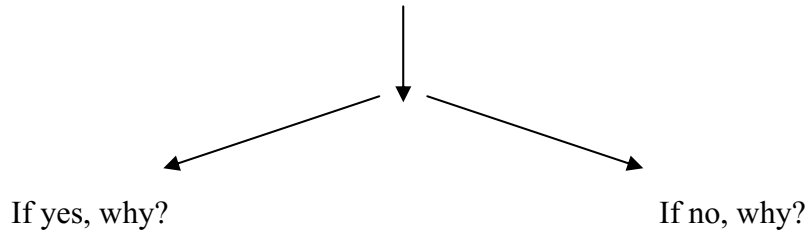
#### Category – Sex and Relationship Education taught to parents

Do you as a parent you have the SRE knowledge to teach your child about sexual matters?

### ADDITIONAL CATEGORY FOR PARENT(S) AND THEIR CHILD(REN):

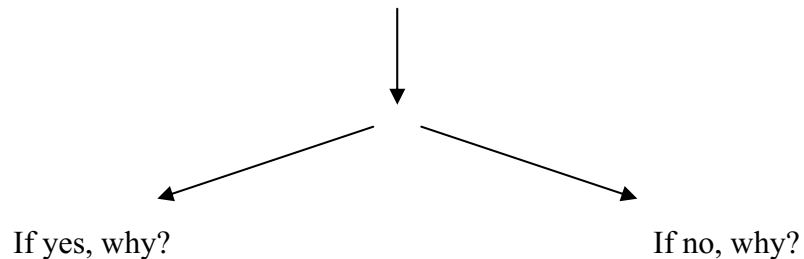
#### Impact of Religion on Discussing SRE within the Family

**PARENT** - Do you think parent's religion impacts on the SRE they give to their children?



EXPLORE IN DETAIL  
Ask questions relating to responses given

**YOUNG PERSON** – Do you think the religious beliefs you have been brought up with influences the SRE you receive?



EXPLORE  
IN DETAIL  
Ask questions relating to responses given



## **Interviews 3 and 4**

### **ADDITIONAL QUESTION FOR PARENT(S):**

#### **Category – SRE taught to parents**

If mother – why do you think your mother talked to you more about sex than your father?

If father – why do you think fathers do not talk to their children about sex?

Looking back do you think the topics associated with the SRE you were given were younger was accurate and correct?

Did you learn any SRE from listening to other people's conversations?

What age do you think you were when you felt you had adequate knowledge of SRE topics?

Looking back do you think you knew enough sex education at your different developmental stages to prepare you for adult life?

If you look back to the SRE that was taught when you were younger, how do you think it could have been improved to provide you with the information you wanted or needed at the time?

### **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR ADOLESCENT(S)**

#### **Category – SRE taught to adolescents**

What size of group is SRE taught in and is it mixed or single-sex?

Was signposting given to say where you get further information or advice?

Why do you prefer to talk to this person about sex?

If Mother – why do you think your mum teaches you most about SRE, rather than your father?

If Father – why do you think your mum teaches you most about SRE, rather than your mother?

What topics are embarrassing to talk about (i.e. relationships)?

Why do you get embarrassed talking about these topics?

**Category - Parental Communication & SRE with Their Children**

Do you think more sex education is given to female children rather than male children?

If yes, why do you think this is?

Are or have you been aware of the SRE being taught to you child at school?

Are there any restrictions on not discussing sexual matters within the family amongst yourselves?

**No further questions were added in Interviews 5 and 6.**

**Interviews 7 and 8**

**ADDITIONAL QUESTION FOR PARENT(S):**

**Category - Parental Communication & SRE with Their Children**

When and what circumstances are these sexual conversations likely to occur when talking to your child(ren)?

How do you overcome any restrictions placed upon on the family when discussing sexual matters?

**No further questions were added in Interviews 9 and 10.**

## **APPENDIX 6**

### **Proforma of questions asked to parents and their children when interviewed separately**

## Questions for Parents

### **1) SRE taught to parents**

What sex and relationship education (SRE) was taught to you as parents when you were younger?

Mother

Father

Which of your parents taught you about sexual matters, and why do you think it was this parent?

If the mother – why do you think fathers do not talk to their children about sex?

Did your own parents ever comment on the sex education that they received when they were younger?

With hindsight, do you think your parents had sufficient knowledge to teach you about sexual matters?

Do you feel your family talked openly about sexual matters when you were younger?

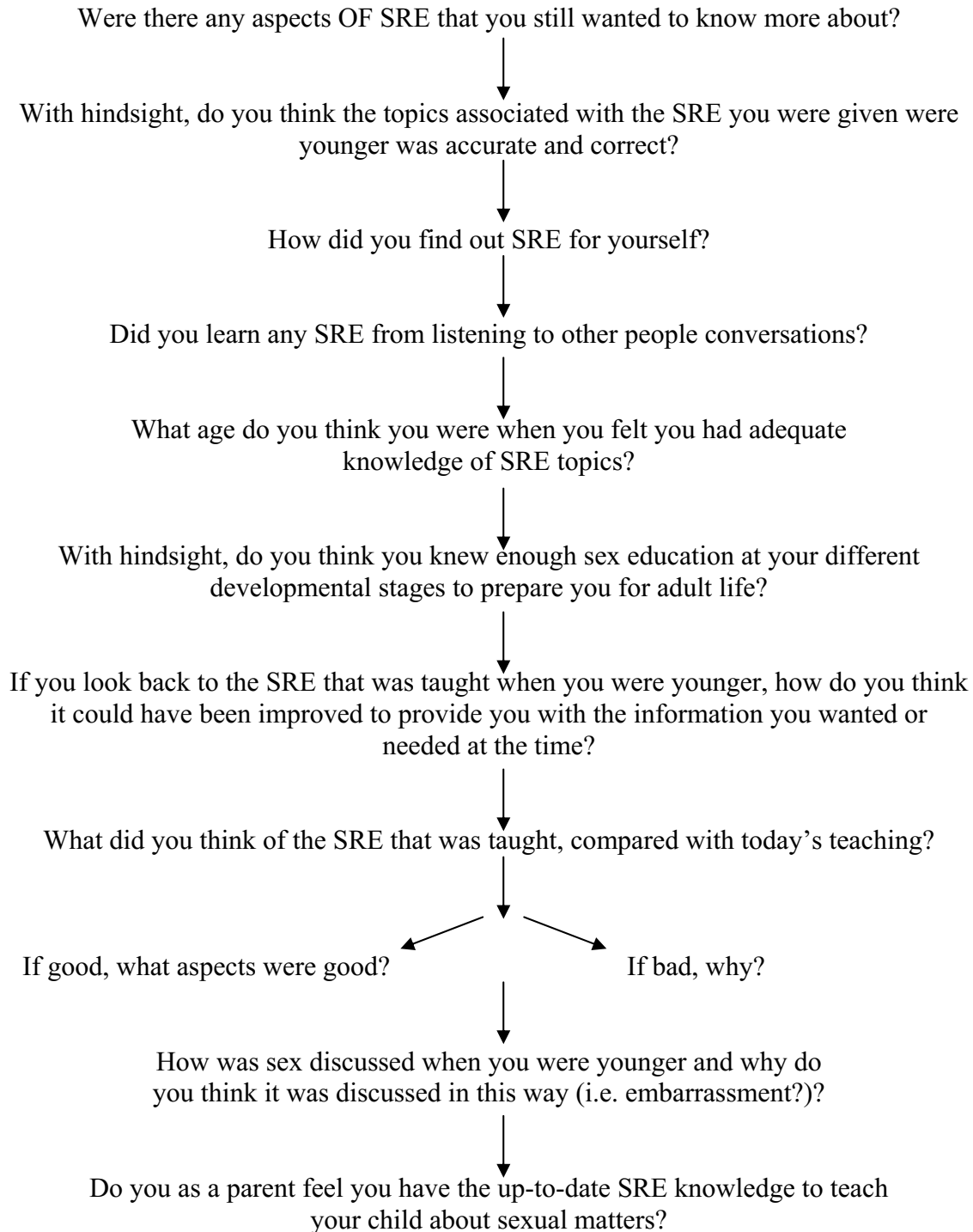
If yes, what aspects of sex education were discussed?

If no, why do you think sexual matters were not discussed more openly within your family when you were younger?

Who taught the SRE (i.e. mother, father, school etc)?

At what age was SRE taught and what topics were discussed?

How and in what context was SRE taught?



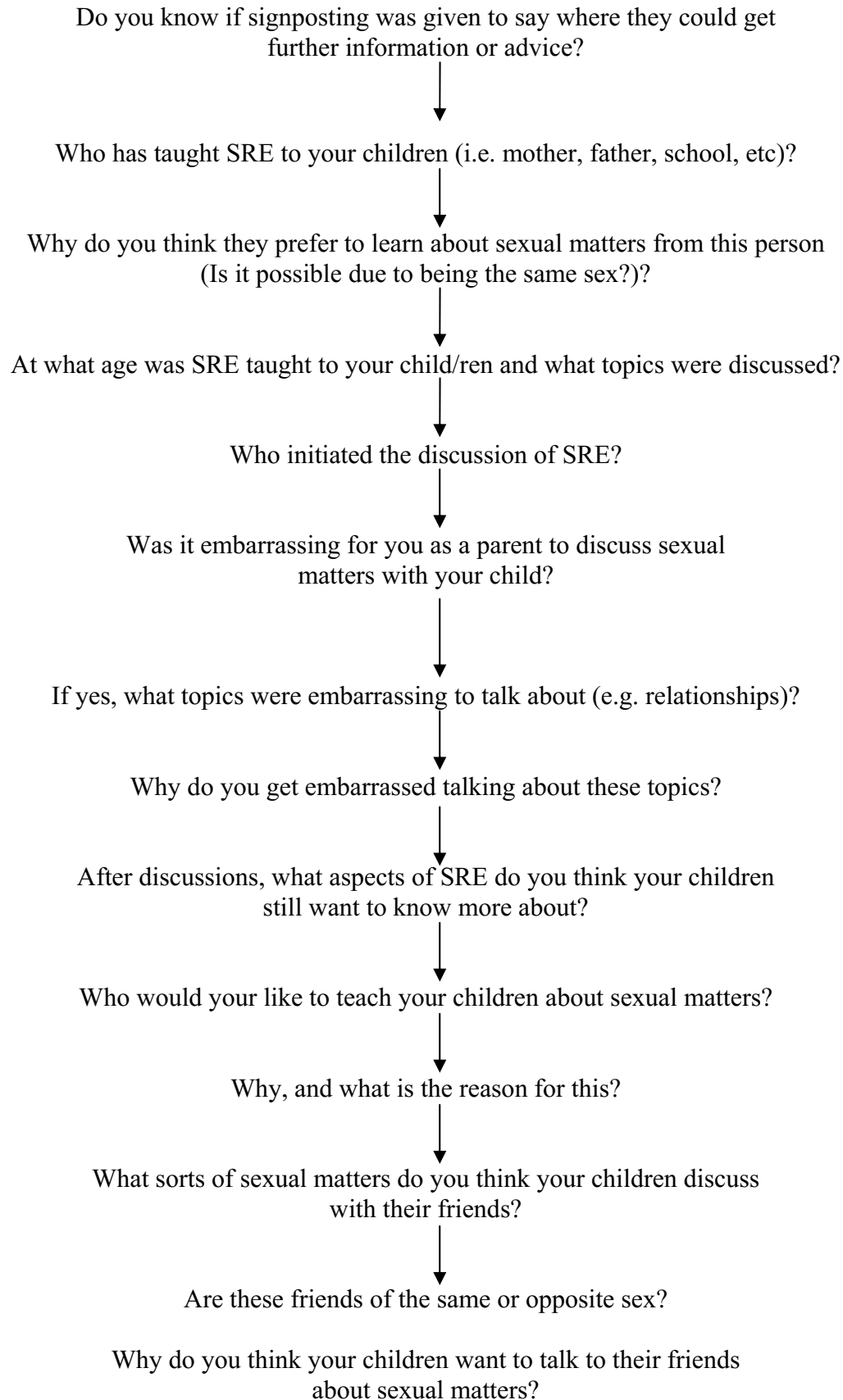
## **2) SRE and your children**

What sex and relationship education (SRE) has been taught to your child/ren?



What size of group was SRE taught in and was is it mixed or single-sex group?





What aspects of SRE do you think they learn more about when talking to their friends?

### **3) Parental communication & SRE with their children**

Which parent mainly talks to their children about sexual matters?



Why is it this parent (i.e. factors)?



If Mother – why do you think the mum teaches the most about SRE, rather than your father?

If Father – why do you think the dad teaches the most about SRE, rather than your mother?



Why do you think they prefer to talk to this parent about sexual matters (Is it possible due to being the same sex?)?



Who initiates the conversations regarding sexual matters?



What topics do parents discuss with their children, and at what age and is it different for sons and daughters?



When and what circumstances are these conversations likely to occur?



What topics do parents NOT discuss with their children?



Why do parents omit these topics regarding sexual matters (i.e. embarrassment?)?

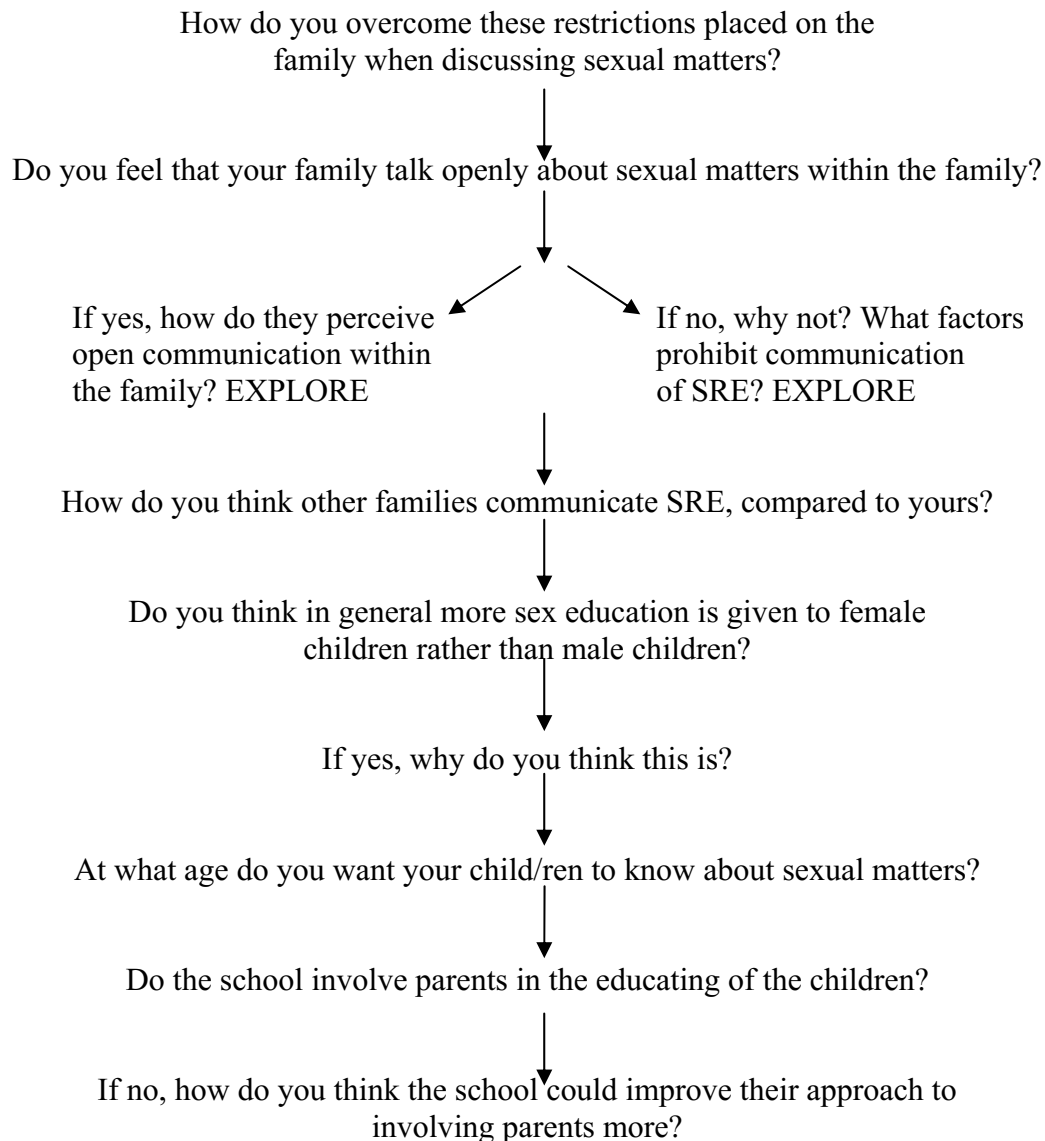


Where do you think your child will learn about the sexual matters if you don't teach them?

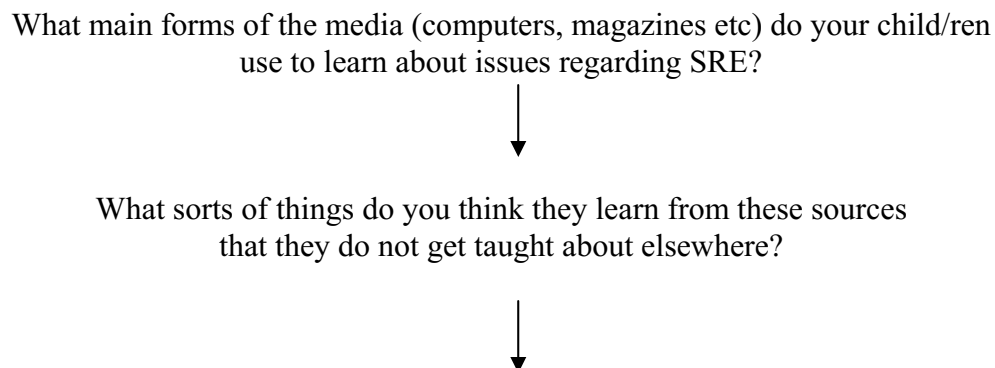


Are there any restrictions on not discussing sexual matters within the family amongst yourselves?

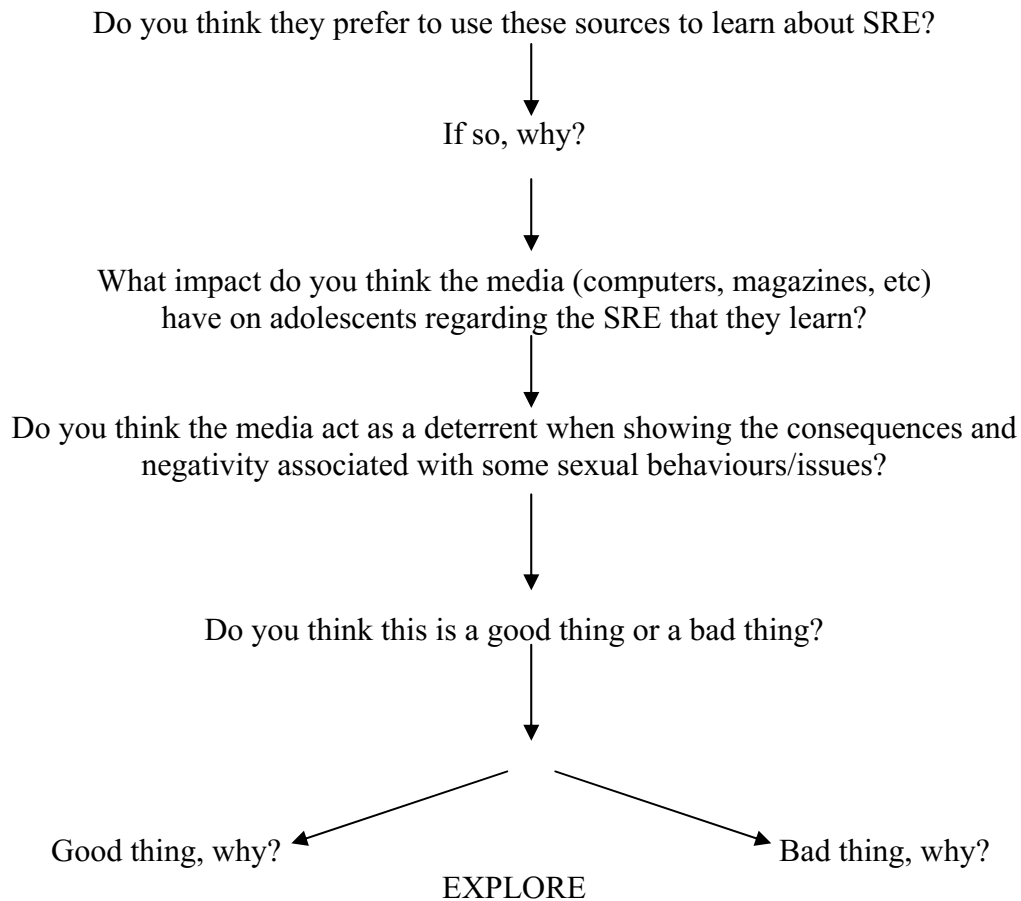




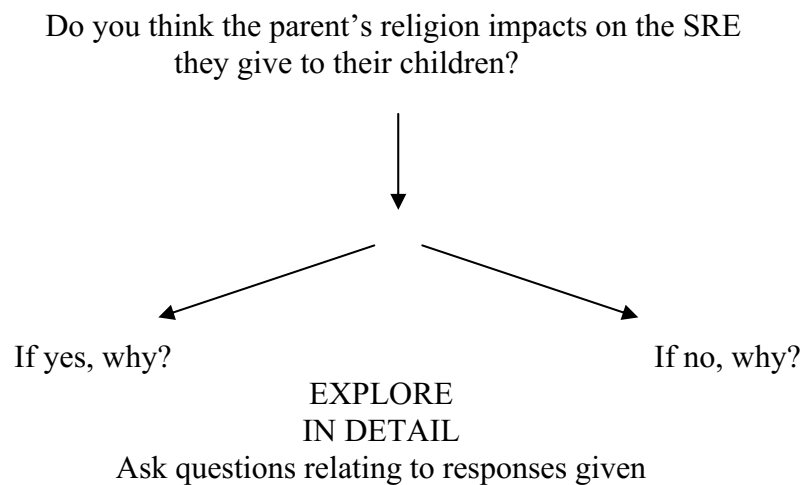
#### **4) Media Impact on SRE within the Family**



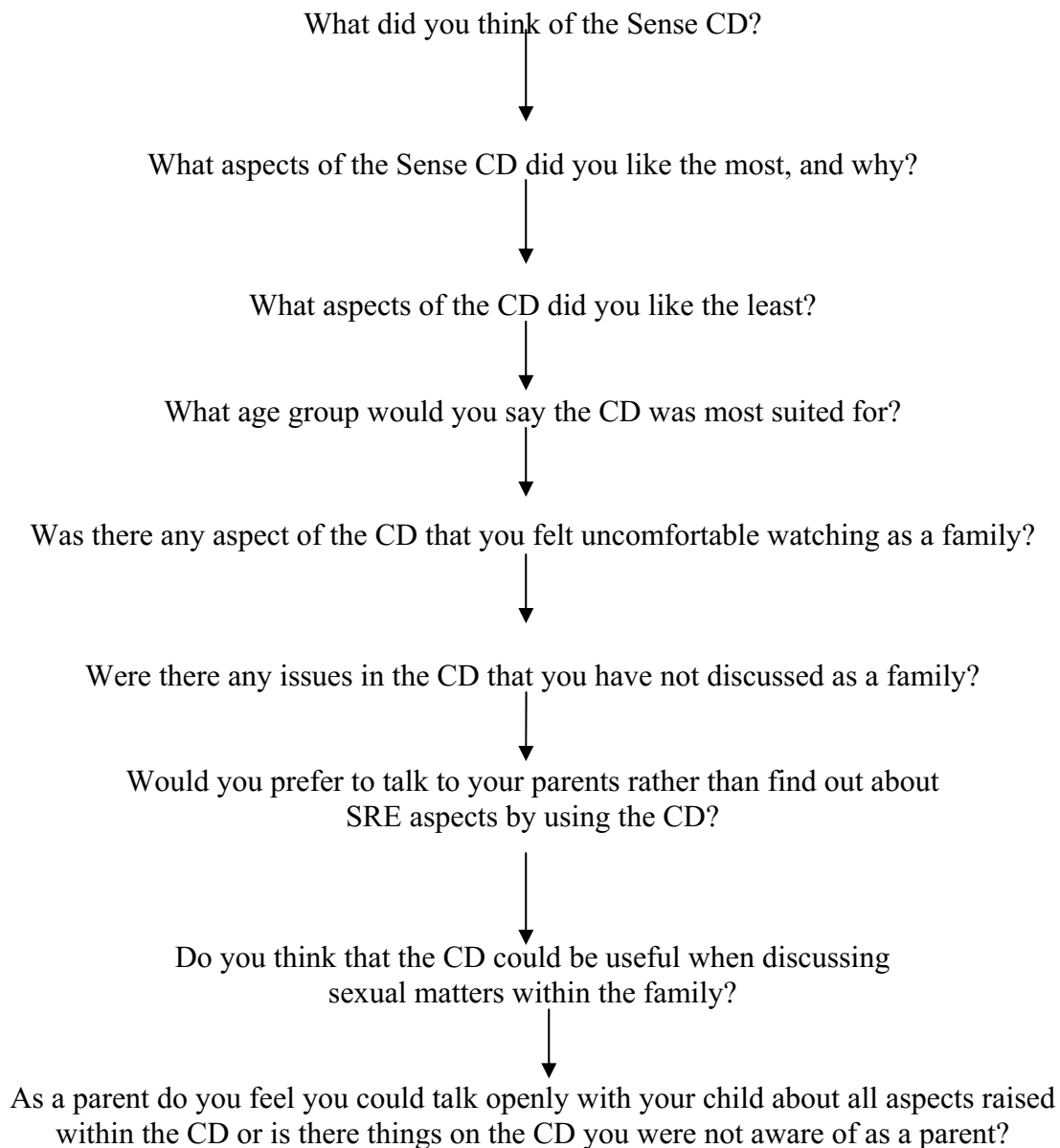




### **5) Impact of religion on discussing SRE within the family**



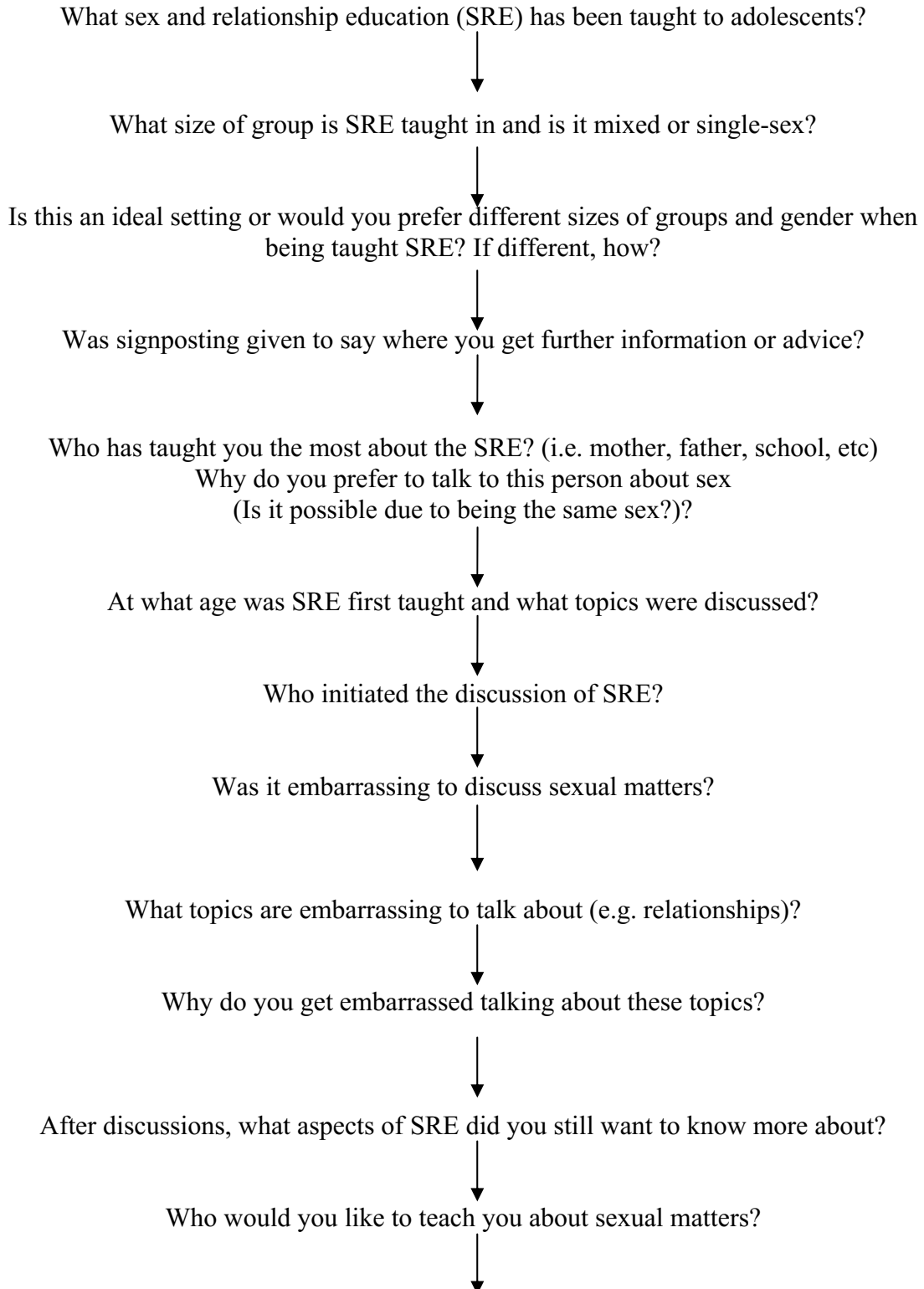
## 6) Impact of the Sense CD on reducing barriers for discussing SRE



**GO BACK ONE WEEK LATER** and ask questions to gain clarity as to how the CD has broke down any barriers when discussing SRE within the family.

## **Questions for Adolescents**

### **1) SRE taught to adolescents**



Why, what is the reason for this?



Do you think that you pick things up from other people's conversations regarding SRE?



What sorts of sexual matters do you discuss with friends?



Are these friends of the same or opposite sex?



What makes you want to talk to your friends about sexual matters?



What aspects of SRE do you learn more about when talking to friends?



## **2) Parental communication & SRE with their children**

Which parent do you mainly talk to about sexual matters?



Why is it this parent (i.e. factors)?



If Mother – why do you think the mum teaches the most about SRE, rather than your father?

If Father – why do you think the dad teaches the most about SRE, rather than your mother?



Why do you prefer to talk to this parent about sexual matters (Is it possible due to being the same sex?)?

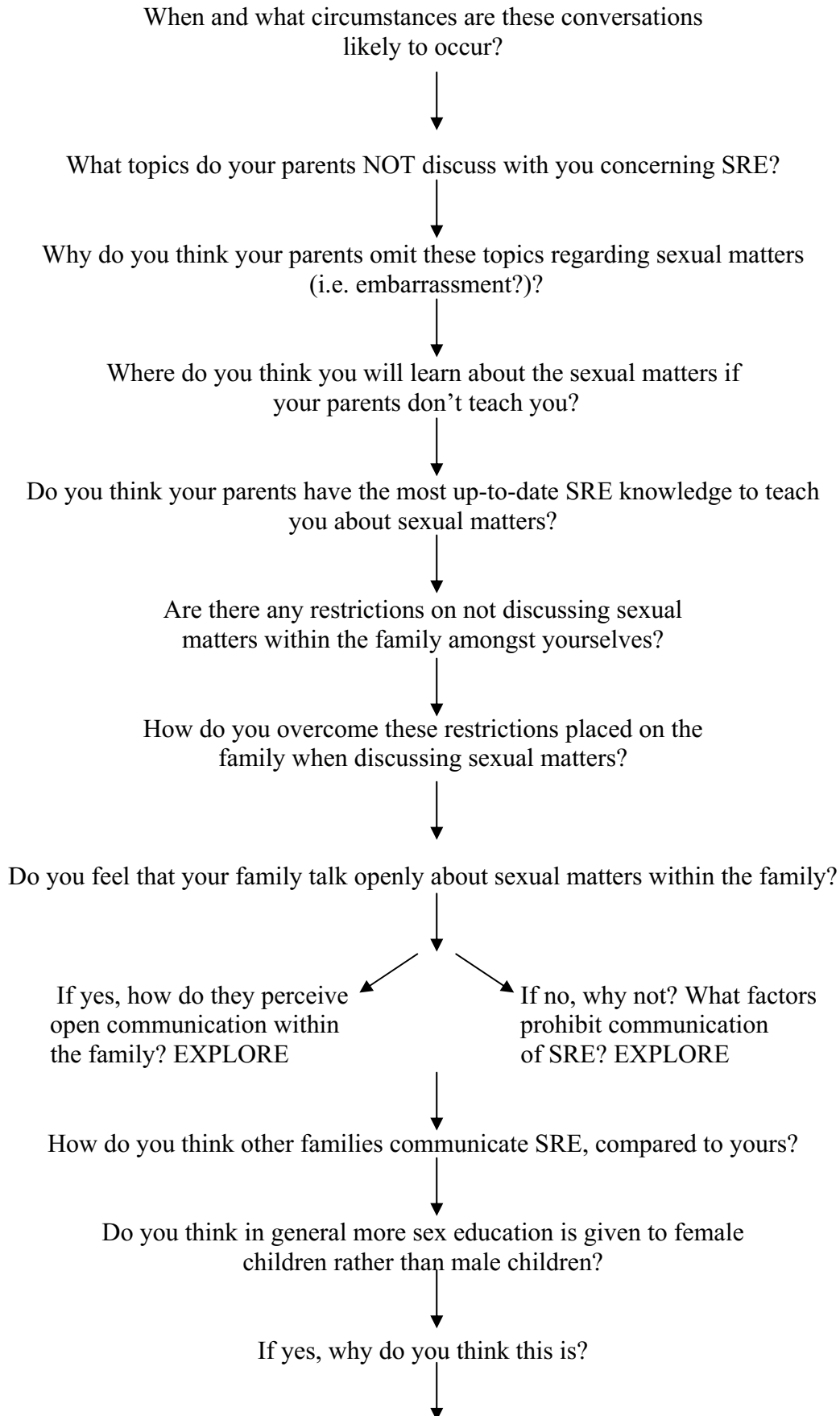


Who initiates the conversations regarding sexual matters?



What SRE topics have your parents discuss with you, and at what age did these conversations occur?





At what age do you think your parents want you to know about sexual matters?



Do the school involve your parents in the SRE you receive?



Do you want your parents to have more involvement in the SRE you receive in school?



If no, how do you think the school could improve their approach to involving parents more?



### **3) Media impact on SRE within the family**

What main forms of the media (computers, magazines etc) do you use to learn about issues regarding SRE?



What sorts of things do you learn from these sources that you do not get taught about elsewhere?



Do you prefer to use these sources to learn about SRE?



If so, why?



What impact do you think the media (computers, magazines, etc) has regarding the SRE that you learn?



Do you think the media act as a deterrent when showing the consequences and negativity associated with some sexual behaviours/ issues?



Do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing?

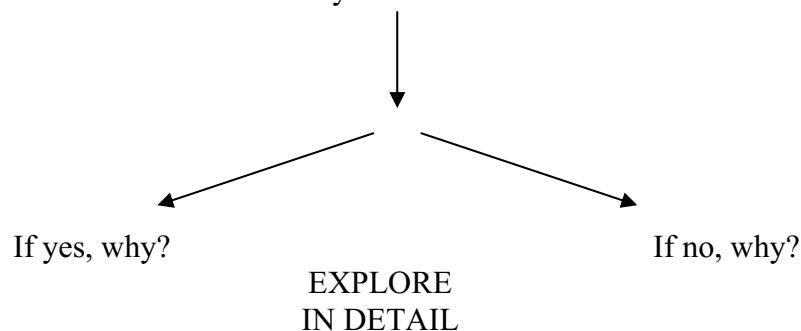


Good thing, why?

Bad thing, why?

#### 4) Impact of religion on discussing SRE within the family

Do you think the religious beliefs you have been brought up with influences the SRE you receive?



Ask questions relating to responses given

#### 5) Impact of the Sense CD on reducing barriers for discussing SRE

What did you think of the Sense CD?



What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?



What aspects of the CD did you like the least?



What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?



Was there any aspect of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?



Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?



Would you prefer to talk to your parents rather than find out about SRE aspects by using the CD?



Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?



**GO BACK ONE WEEK LATER** and ask questions to gain clarity as to how the CD has broken down any barriers when discussing SRE within the family.

## **APPENDIX 7**

### **Progression of questions asked when interviewed separately**



## **Interviews 13 and 14**

### **ADDITIONAL QUESTION FOR PARENT(S):**

#### **Category – Sex and Relationship Education taught to parents**

Would you have preferred for SRE matters to have been discussed more openly within the family when you were younger?

#### **Category – Sex and Relationship Education taught to their children**

Do you think your child will discuss some sexual matters with his/ her friends that they would not talk to you about?

If yes, why and what sorts of things do you think they discuss?

#### **Category - Parental Communication & SRE with Their Children**

Would you have been as open answering these questions if your children had been present?

If yes, why?

If no, why?

### **ADDITIONAL QUESTION FOR ADOLESCENTS:**

#### **Category – Sex and Relationship Education taught to adolescents**

Why do you think your parent(s) have told you about sexual matters?

Are there things that you would discuss with your friends that you would not discuss with your parents?

If yes, why and what sexual matters would these be?

#### **Category - Parental Communication & SRE with Their Children**

Would you prefer to discuss sexual matters with your other parent instead or as well?

Would you have been as open answering these questions if your parent/s had been present?

If yes, why?

If no, why?

### **Category - Impact of the Sense CD on reducing barriers for discussing SRE**

After you have watched the CD do you feel you would be able to talk more openly with your parents about all aspects raised within the CD?

## **Interviews 15 and 16**

### **ADDITIONAL QUESTION FOR PARENT(S):**

#### **Category – Sex and Relationship Education taught to parents**

What aspects of SRE do you remember still wanting to know more about?

If your friends told you things about sex do you think they knew much more than you?

Do you think that if the SRE taught to you had been discussed more openly you would feel more comfortable talking to your child/ren about sexual matters?

#### **Category - Parental Communication & SRE with Their Children**

So do you think that as a parent if you knew more about what was being taught and when it is taught that this would strengthen the relationship with you child/ren when discussing sexual matters within the home environment?

#### **Category – Media impact on SRE in the family**

When your children use the media to learn about sexual matters do you feel they use these because they can relate to what they are being told about?

When your children use the media, do you think they learn more about the opposite sex?

Do you think your children feel more confident with the knowledge they have learnt from the different media types they view and read?

### **ADDITIONAL QUESTION FOR ADOLESCENTS:**

#### **Category – Sex and Relationship Education taught to adolescents**

Do you know where to go for contraceptive and sexual health advice?

Do you think that your friends know more about SRE matters than you do?

### **Category - Parental Communication & SRE with Their Children**

If you do not talk to your parents about sex which adult do you prefer to talk to about SRE matters?

Some young males sometimes feel that fewer SRE matters are discussed with young females, but do you agree?

### **Category – Media impact on SRE in the family**

When reading magazines, watching TV, videos and other media types do you feel that you can relate to what you are reading about or watching?

When using the media to learn about SRE do you feel you learn more about the opposite sex?

Do you feel more confident with the knowledge you have learnt when using the different media types?

**No further questions were added in Interviews 17, 18, 19 and 20 as saturation was being reached.**

## **APPENDIX 8**

### **Pre-sexual knowledge questionnaire**

# ***Sexual Knowledge Questionnaire***

**Please circle the correct answer and give a percentage of how confident you are that the answer you have given is correct.**

**1. Does HIV only infect gay people?**

- 1) Yes
- 2) No
- 3) Only gay men
- 4) Only gay women

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**2. What is the legal age of consent when people can have sex with each other?**

- 1) 14 years of age
- 2) 15 years of age
- 3) 16 years of age
- 4) 18 years of age

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**3. How can you tell if somebody has HIV or AIDS?**

- 1) They carry an ID card
- 2) They look tired and ill
- 3) You cannot tell
- 4) Their hair turns grey over night

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**4. Semen is a fluid that contains...**

- 1) Blood
- 2) Orange
- 3) Sperm
- 4) Coca cola

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**5. What does STI stand for?**

- 1) Sterilised Testing Injection
- 2) Sexually Transmitted Infection
- 3) Specially Treaded Inpatient
- 4) Standard Transmission Inaccuracy

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**6. What is a clitoris?**

- 1) Male sex organ
- 2) Female sex organ
- 3) Type of contraceptive
- 4) Type of fruit

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**7. Are you able to get free condoms from your nearest young peoples clinic if you are under 16 years of age?**

- 1) Yes, anyone under 16 years old can get free condoms from the young peoples clinic
- 2) No, only males can get free condoms from the young persons clinic
- 3) Yes, only if you are accompanied by an adult
- 4) No, you can not get free condoms from the young persons clinic

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**8. What protects you most from HIV infection?**

1. Contraceptive Pills
2. Condoms
3. Spermicidal jelly
4. The coil

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**9. HIV is a...**

- 1) Virus
- 2) Bacteria
- 3) Fungus
- 4) Germ

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**10. What are the specific symptoms of AIDS?**

- 1) A rash from head to foot
- 2) Aching all over
- 3) There are no specific symptoms
- 4) Your hair starts to fall out

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**11. Females can get pregnant through having oral sex?**

- 1) True, only if she is taking the pill
- 2) False, oral sex can not get females pregnant
- 3) True, only if she has oral sex with a male
- 4) False, oral sex only happens between gay men

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**12. The OVUM/OVA is a ...**

- 1) Male sex organ
- 2) Hard boiled egg
- 3) Female sex organ
- 4) Soft boiled egg

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**13. Can mosquitoes or other insects transmit STIs/HIV?**

- 1) Yes, only if they bite you on the body
- 2) No, mosquitoes and other insects do not transmit STIs/HIV
- 3) Yes, only if you eat the mosquitoes or insects
- 4) No, not unless you put cream on to protect yourself

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**14. What is the common term for menstruation?**

- 1) An orgasm
- 2) Periods
- 3) Sexual intercourse
- 4) Pregnancy

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**Thank you for completing the  
Sexual Knowledge Questionnaire.**

## **APPENDIX 9**

### **Post-sexual knowledge questionnaire**



# *Sexual Knowledge Questionnaire*

**Please circle the correct answer and give a percentage of how confident you are that the answer you have given is correct.**

**1. What protects you most from HIV infection?**

1. Contraceptive Pills
2. Condoms
3. Spermicidal jelly
4. The coil

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**2. HIV is a...**

1. Virus
2. Bacteria
3. Fungus
4. Germ

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**3. What does STI stand for?**

- 1) Sterilised Testing Injection
- 2) Sexually Transmitted Infection
- 3) Specially Treaded Inpatient
- 4) Standard Transmission Inaccuracy

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**4. Does HIV only infect gay people?**

- 1) Yes
- 2) No
- 3) Only gay men
- 4) Only gay women

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**5. What is the common term for menstruation?**

- 1) An orgasm
- 2) Periods
- 3) Sexual intercourse
- 4) Pregnancy

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**6. Are you able to get free condoms from your nearest young peoples clinic if you are under 16 years of age?**

- 1) Yes, anyone under 16 years old can get free condoms from the young peoples clinic
- 2) No, only males can get free condoms from the young persons clinic
- 3) Yes, only if you are accompanied by an adult
- 4) No, you can not get free condoms from the young persons clinic

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**7. How can you tell if somebody has HIV or AIDS?**

- 1) They carry an ID card
- 2) They look tired and ill
- 3) You cannot tell
- 4) They hair turns grey over night

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**8. What is a clitoris?**

- 1) Male sex organ
- 2) Female sex organ
- 3) Type of contraceptive
- 4) Type of fruit

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**9. The OVUM/OVA is a ...**

- 1) Male sex organ
- 2) Hard boiled egg
- 3) Female sex organ
- 4) Soft boiled egg

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**10. Semen is a fluid that contains...**

- 1) Blood
- 2) Orange
- 3) Sperm
- 4) Coca cola

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**11. What are the specific symptoms of AIDS?**

- 1) A rash from head to foot
- 2) Aching all over
- 3) There are no specific symptoms
- 4) Your hair starts to fall out

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**12. Can mosquitoes or other insects transmit STIs/HIV?**

- 1) Yes, only if they bite you on the body
- 2) No, mosquitoes and other insects do not transmit STIs/HIV
- 3) Yes, only if you eat the mosquitoes or insects
- 4) No, not unless you put cream on to protect yourself

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**13. Females can get pregnant through having oral sex?**

- 1) True, only if she is taking the pill
- 2) False, oral sex can not get females pregnant
- 3) True, only if she has oral sex with a male
- 4) False, oral sex only happens between gay men

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**14 What is the legal age of consent when people can have sex with each other?**

- 1) 14 years of age
- 2) 15 years of age
- 3) 16 years of age
- 4) 18 years of age

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**Thank you for completing the  
Sexual Knowledge Questionnaire.**

## **APPENDIX 10**

### **Follow-up sexual knowledge questionnaire**

# *Sexual Knowledge Questionnaire*

**Please circle the correct answer and give a percentage of how confident you are that the answer you have given is correct.**

**1. Does HIV only infect gay people?**

- 1) Yes
- 2) No
- 3) Only gay men
- 4) Only gay women

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**2. What is the legal age of consent when people can have sex with each other?**

- 1) 14 years of age
- 2) 15 years of age
- 3) 16 years of age
- 4) 18 years of age

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**3. How can you tell if somebody has HIV or AIDS?**

- 1) They carry an ID card
- 2) They look tired and ill
- 3) You cannot tell
- 4) Their hair turns grey over night

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**4. Semen is a fluid that contains...**

- 1) Blood
- 2) Orange
- 3) Sperm
- 4) Coca cola

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**5. What does STI stand for?**

- 1) Sterilised Testing Injection
- 2) Sexually Transmitted Infection
- 3) Specially Treated Inpatient
- 4) Standard Transmission Inaccuracy

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**6. What is a clitoris?**

- 1) Male sex organ
- 2) Female sex organ
- 3) Type of contraceptive
- 4) Type of fruit

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**7. Are you able to get free condoms from your nearest young peoples clinic if you are under 16 years of age?**

- 1) Yes, anyone under 16 years old can get free condoms from the young peoples clinic
- 2) No, only males can get free condoms from the young persons clinic
- 3) Yes, only if you are accompanied by an adult
- 4) No, you can not get free condoms from the young persons clinic

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**8. What protects you most from HIV infection?**

- 1) Contraceptive Pills
- 2) Condoms
- 3) Spermicidal jelly
- 4) The coil

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**9. HIV is a...**

- 1) Virus
- 2) Bacteria
- 3) Fungus
- 4) Germ

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**10. What are the specific symptoms of AIDS?**

- 1) A rash from head to foot
- 2) Aching all over
- 3) There are no specific symptoms
- 4) Your hair starts to fall out

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**11. Females can get pregnant through having oral sex?**

- 1) True, only if she is taking the pill
- 2) False, oral sex can not get females pregnant
- 3) True, only if she has oral sex with a male
- 4) False, oral sex only happens between gay men

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**12. The OVUM/OVA is a ...**

- 1) Male sex organ
- 2) Hard boiled egg
- 3) Female sex organ
- 4) Soft boiled egg

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**13. Can mosquitoes or other insects transmit STIs/HIV?**

- 1) Yes, only if they bite you on the body
- 2) No, mosquitoes and other insects do not transmit STIs/HIV
- 3) Yes, only if you eat the mosquitoes or insects
- 4) No, not unless you put cream on to protect yourself

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

**14. What is the common term for menstruation?**

- 1) An orgasm
- 2) Periods
- 3) Sexual intercourse
- 4) Pregnancy

How confident are you that the answer you have given is correct \_\_\_\_\_%

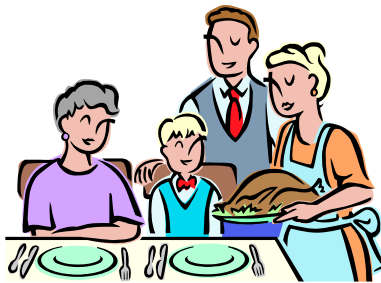
**Thank you for completing the  
Sexual Knowledge Questionnaire.**

## **APPENDIX 11**

### **Advertisement for recruiting families**



Research is needed to identify  
how families discuss  
sexual matters



Have your say!

If you would like to take part  
In this important research  
Please call:  
Triece on 07737 892121

**Research is part of a PhD study  
Need parents and their children  
(aged 11-16) to spare a few hours  
of their time – educational SRE  
resource will be used for this  
research study.**



## **APPENDIX 12**

### **Verbatim debrief instructions**

**Following each interview the following details will be given to family members:**

The parents and young person will be thanked for taking part in the research study and will be informed that the information they have given relates to examining the effects of using a sex education CD ROM in a family setting to identify the openness of the communication of sexual issues among family members

Participants will be asked if they have any questions and thanked for their participation in the research study.

## **APPENDIX 13**

### **Process and structure of the grounded theory method for families interviewed together**

## Open, Axial and Selective Coding Process for Families 1-10

**Any text in bold or that underlined is duplicated and refers to multiple sections.**

Any text in red relates to the findings from the follow-up interview.

| <b>Family #1</b><br><b>Mother (43), Father (43) and Daughter (14)</b>   | <b>Family #2</b><br><b>Mother (36), Son (12) and absent father (37)</b>  | <b>Open Coding</b>                                 | <b>Axial Coding</b>                                     | <b>Selective Coding</b>                               |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| Mother & father have taught SRE to their daughter.  | Only mother has taught SRE to her son.   | SRE taught to adolescents                          | Why this parent?  | Joint parent communications                           |
| Parents have talked to their daughter about sexual matters from primary school age.   | Mother has told the basics of SRE when her son has asked questions, not necessarily from a young age.  | Parental communication and SRE with their children | What SRE is discussed?                                  | Preliminary age of SRE discussions                    |
| Daughter has been told about sex in a serious way.  | Son has been told about sex in a less serious way.   | Parental communication and SRE with their children | Gender differences?                                     | Manner in which SRE matters are discussed             |
| Both parents and child initiate conversations regarding sexual matters.   | Child mainly initiates conversations about sexual matters.   | Parental communication and SRE with their children | With who and with what outcome?                         | Openness of SRE family discussions                    |
| Would ask both parents about sexual matters.  | Would only ask mother about sexual matters because he trusts her and she knows about sex and the body because she is a nurse. Father is thick because - a butcher. | SRE taught to adolescents                          | Embarrassment associated with discussing sexual matters | Children's perception of parents SRE knowledge        |
| Daughter has wanted to know about sexual matters as it allowed her to prepare for changes that were going to happen to her. | Son wants to be taught about sexual matters so he is not surprised when things happen.   | SRE taught to adolescents                          | What aspects of SRE are learnt about?                   | Children want to know what is going to happen to them |
| Daughter does talk about sex to her friends, but it is only silly stuff.  | Son mainly laughs with his mates about sexual stuff, but not about anything serious.   | SRE taught to adolescents                          | Why? Do friends know more?                              | SRE and friends                                       |
| Daughter would talk to her parents about sex before talking to anyone else.   | Son would ask his mum about aspects of sex before talking to anyone else.  | Parental communication and SRE with their children | Why is there a preference?                              | Positive parent/child sexual communications           |
| Parents feel SRE is embarrassing to discuss because it was embarrassing for   | Mother not embarrassed to discuss SRE and laughs to make it a less serious   | SRE taught to parents                              | Why, and does this prevent SRE                          | Sexual matters are embarrassing                       |

|  |   |  |  |   |
|--|---|--|--|---|
| them when they were younger.   | subject to talk about with her son.   |  | communications?  | to discuss                                      |
| Daughter does not think SRE is embarrassing to discuss.  | Son not embarrassed to discuss SRE, but was embarrassed when he did not know something.   | Parental communication and SRE with their children | What subjects are embarrassing to discuss?                         | Embarrassment due to lack of knowledge          |
| Parents think SRE is embarrassing because it was embarrassing for their parents to discuss with them when they were younger. | Father finds it embarrassing to talk about sex with his sons because he did not receive SRE from his parents when he was younger. | SRE taught to parents                              | Why was sex an embarrassing subject to discuss in olden days?      | Historical aspects of discussing sexual matters |
| Sex education taught earlier and is better than it was for the parents.  | Sex education taught earlier and is better than it was for the parents.   | SRE taught to adolescents                          | Why and what is outcome of this?                                   | Formal SRE                                      |
| Mainly taught about developmental aspects, not necessarily SRE topics.   | Mother or father did not receive any sex education.   | SRE taught to parents                              | How did parents learn about SRE topics?                            | Parents given basic facts of SRE                |
| Father not comfortable discussing all topics associated with SRE.  | Mother comfortable discussing all topics associated with SRE.   | SRE taught to parents                              | Why and with what consequence?                                     | Parents willingness to discuss SRE topics       |
| Differences in terminology (i.e. boyfriends vs. boys as friends).  | Differences in terminology (i.e. gay meaning daft and stupid).  | SRE taught to parents                              | What SRE topics do parents not know?                               | Lack of parental knowledge                      |
| Parents think that their family is the norm when discussing SRE.   | Every family discusses sex differently based on the needs of their children.  | Media impact on SRE within the family              | When, why and how SRE is communicated?                             | Perception of other families                    |
| Daughter has used the Internet and magazines to learn about sexual matters and situations.                                   | Son uses the Internet and magazines to learn about sexual matters.  | Media impact on SRE within the family              | Why use the median?<br>What are the benefits?                      | Media influences to learn more SRE              |
| Children learn and are exposed to sexy images and content on SKY television.   | Children learn and are exposed to sexy images and content on SKY television.  | Media impact on SRE within the family              | Why and with what consequence?                                     | Positive/negative effects of the media          |
| Father thinks the media do not always help in passing the right sexual messages over to children.                            | Media can be useful but the Internet can be hazardous when accessing the different search engines.                                | Media impact on SRE within the family              | What aspects of SRE are inappropriate for children to learn about? | Media influences                                |
| <b>Impact of multimedia program on reducing barriers for discussing SRE within the family</b>                                |   |  |  |   |

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| Parents thought the Sense CD was okay, as it says what it has to say and is very sensible. Good for children who may not be able to talk to their parents. | Mother thinks the Sense CD is good, especially for the younger generation to learn about sexual matters. Would use it up until the age of 15 years.   | Overall, parents thought that the multimedia program gave good, sensible information relevant for the younger generation. Would be an important resource for young people who are not able to communicate sexual matters with their parents. |
| Daughter thought the Sense CD was good, but did not teach her anything new.  | Son thought the Sense CD was really good as it gives facts and good advice.   | Variations in age of children (14 vs. 11) could explain the purposefulness of the multimedia program but both thought it was a good resource for learning about different aspects of SRE.  |
| Parents want to think that their daughter would talk to them about sexual matters first, rather than using media sources.                                  | Mother wants to think that her son would talk to her first about sexual matters, rather than using the media sources.   | Parents would hope that their children would talk to them rather than use the multimedia program to learn about SRE matters.   |
| The Sense CD did not improve the communication between the parents and their daughter, as they have already discussed the contents of the CD previously.   | The Sense CD did not appear to improve the communication immediately, but the son wanted to learn more at his age and the mother thinks he will ask questions based on things he has learned from the multimedia program when he is unsure of something on. | Although the multimedia program may not have improved sexual communications within the family, the mother in interview two felt that it could be responsible for sexual conversations being initiated in the future.                         |

### To investigate the following based on interviews 1 and 2

- How SRE was taught to parents
- How SRE was taught to child
- Parental communication
- Level of SRE taught by parents
- Age SRE is taught by parents
- Initiation of SRE
- Do parents feel they have the most up-to-date SRE to teach their children about sexual matters?
- Parent observation and teaching SRE at the right time
- Parental attitudes and impact on child – e.g. gays
- Impact of religion on parents and furthermore their children

- Media impact on child's SRE education
- Impact of the Sense CD on reducing barriers for families to discuss SRE.

**Main categories from the generated themes after 2 interview sessions**

- ❖ **SRE taught to adolescents**
- ❖ **SRE taught to parents**
- ❖ **Parental communication of SRE with their children**
- ❖ **Media impact on SRE within the family**
- ❖ **Impact of the multimedia program on reducing barriers for discussing SRE within the family**



| <b>Family # 3<br/>Mother (38) &amp; Daughter (15)</b>   | <b>Family # 4<br/>Mother (36), Daughter (13) &amp;<br/>Absent Father</b>   | <b>Open Coding</b>                                     | <b>Axial Coding</b>   | <b>Selective<br/>Coding</b>                    |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| No SRE since year 7 - Taught by school nurse.   | No SRE since year 7 – Taught by school and school nurse.   | SRE taught to adolescents                              | Why is no SRE given after this time?                        | SRE provided at school                         |
| Received no SRE that included relationships.  | Received no SRE that included relationships.   | SRE taught to adolescents                              | Why does SRE not include relationships?                     | SRE provided at school                         |
| Talks to same-sex friends mostly about sexual matters.  | Talks to mother mostly about sexual matters.   | SRE taught to adolescents                              | Why this person? Closeness/ trust?                          | Preference of who to talk to about SRE         |
| Prefer school nurse to teach SRE.   | Prefers mum to teach SRE.  | SRE taught to adolescents                              | What aspects increase these communications?                 | Positive relations with mother                 |
| <u>Uses problem pages in girly magazines to educate herself about how to manage different situations.</u>             | <u>Uses problem pages in girly magazines to educate herself about how to manage different situations.</u>  | Media impact on SRE within the family                  | What do they learn from these sources? Why use them?        | Media influences                               |
| Parents feel young people need better SRE that is continuously reinforced within school over a longer period of time. | Parent feels young people need better SRE that is continuously reinforced within school over a longer period of time.  | SRE taught to adolescents                              | When and what SRE teach to children?                        | Quality of SRE given                           |
| Parent unsure of SRE taught to her daughter.  | Parents need to be told what SRE is taught and when it is delivered so they can reinforce the education at home.   | SRE taught to adolescents                              | How would parents like formal SRE to be taught?             | SRE provided at school                         |
| Mother received poor sex education due to Catholic upbringing.  | Mother had poor sex education regardless of religion (not Catholic though).  | SRE taught to parents                                  | How did parents learn about SRE matters?                    | Poor SRE given to parents                      |
| Mother's parents followed the Catholic faith and therefore SRE was limited for the parent. JUST SAY NO!               | Mother's parents did not know much SRE to be able to teach effective SRE.  | Impact of religion on discussing SRE within the family | Where did parents learn about SRE matters?                  | Lack of knowledge of parents, parents.         |
| Mother learnt sex education through sisters and a bit from her mother.  | Mother learnt sex education from her friends and some from her mother.   | SRE taught to parents                                  | What did they still want to know more about?                | Learnt SRE from same-sex people                |
| Mother brought up with Catholic guilt which prevented her from expressing feeling that she may have had.              | Father brought up with Catholic beliefs but does not want these beliefs to be reinforced within the family when discussing or learning about sexual matters. | Impact of religion on discussing SRE within the family | How would they like these positive communications to occur? | Parents want better SRE for their own children |
| Communication – Mother talks to   | Communication – Mother talks to  | Parental   | Why is it this  | Parental                                       |

|   |   |  |  |   |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| daughter about SRE matters.   | daughter about SRE matters.   | communication and SRE with their children          | parent who communicates SRE?   | responsibility  |
| Mother talked to daughter about sex as she was reaching puberty.  | Mother has talked to daughter about sex from 3 years of age.  | Parental communication and SRE with their children | Why are there variations in when SRE matters are initiated?                        | Preliminary age of SRE conversations                    |
| Daughter embarrassed to talk about sex with mother.   | Daughter not embarrassed to talk about sex with mother.   | SRE taught to adolescents                          | Why do children get embarrassed discussing sexual matters with their parents?      | Embarrassment associated with discussing sexual matters |
| Tells daughter about SRE topics.  | <b>Discusses</b> SRE topics with daughter.  | Parental communication and SRE with their children | Does the way parents approach SRE deter SRE matters being discussed?               | Manner in which SRE was discussed                       |
| Mother wants daughter to have better SRE than she had.  | Mother wants daughter to have better SRE than she had.  | Parental communication and SRE with their children | What are the reasons for parents wanting better SRE for their children?            | Positive communications                                 |
| Mother feels she and her daughter can talk openly about SRE topics.   | Mother and daughter feel they have a trusting relationship and do talk openly about SRE topics.                 | Parental communication and SRE with their children | Does having a close/ trusting relationship with mother improve SRE communications? | Positive relations with mother                          |
| Mother thought young people are more open about sexual matters compared to when they were young.                | Mother thought young people are more open about sexual matters compared to when they were young.                | Media impact on SRE within the family              | What contributes to SRE communications becoming the norm?                          | SRE as the norm   |
| NO Father present within family.  | Could not talk to dad about sex.  | Parental communication and SRE with their children | Why can female children not talk to their fathers about SRE matters?               | Exclusion of fathers                                    |
| Both thought the CD should be made available and be accessible in school and advertised to parents so it can be | Both thought the CD should be made available and be accessible in school and advertised to parents so it can be | Impact of multimedia program on                    | How do schools contribute to SRE being   | SRE provided at school → positive SRE                   |

|   |  |   |   |                                |
|---|--|---|---|--------------------------------|
| used within the home to improve SRE communications.   | used within the home to improve SRE communications.  | reducing barriers for discussing SRE  | discussed within the home environment?  | conversations at home          |
| Parent and daughter watched the CD separately.  | Parent and daughter watched the CD together.   | Impact of multimedia program on reducing barriers for discussing SRE  | Why could children/ parents not watch the CD together?                              | Positive relations with mother |
| Daughter would use CD rather than mum to learn SRE.   | Daughter would talk to her mum, rather than used the CD, but would use the CD to learn aspects of SRE together.  | Impact of multimedia program on reducing barriers for discussing SRE  | Does not having a close/ trusting relationship hinder SRE communications?           | Positive relations with mother |
| Media can be too explicit when teaching SRE.  | Media good in generating topics for discussion.  | Media impact on SRE within the family   | What is it that parents find too explicit?  | Media influences               |
| Uses problem pages in girly magazines to educate herself about how to manage different situations.  | Uses problem pages in girly magazines to educate herself about how to manage different situations.   | Media impact on SRE within the family   | What do they learn from these sources? Why use them?                                | Media influences               |
| Mother brought up with Catholic guilt which prevented her from expressing feelings that she may have had.   | Father brought up with Catholic beliefs but does not want these beliefs to be reinforced within the family.  | Effects of religion on discussing SRE within the family   | What influence does parents religious beliefs have over SRE being discussed openly? | Historical family context      |
| <b>Impact of multimedia program on reducing barriers for discussing SRE within the family</b>   |  |   |   |                                |
| Both thought the CD was good, informative and gave facts that young people needed to know.  | Both thought the CD was good, informative and gave facts that young people needed to know.   | Overall, mothers and their daughters thought the multimedia program was informative and gave the facts, which they needed to know about.  |   |                                |
| Both thought that it allowed young people to go through the CD in private.  | Both thought that it allowed young people to learn about SRE at their own pace.  | It was thought by parents that the multimedia programme was a useful resource it that it provided privacy and an individual way of learning about SRE topics for young people.          |   |                                |
| Daughter thought the CD should be made available and be accessible in school.   | Both thought the CD should be made available and be accessible in school and advertised to parents so it can be used within the home to improve SRE communications.                            | Thought the multimedia program should be made available at school and information given to parents as it would be a useful tool for initiating sexual communications within the family. |   |                                |
| Mother thought the variety of the sections was good, but the daughter thought the scenarios were good because it gave examples of problems and how you would be able to overcome them if you were in that | Both thought quiz was good, as it allowed parents and their children to identify where they lacked knowledge of SRE. Also allowed for both to find out the correct information for themselves. | The 'True and False' section was popular as it challenged children and parents to identify their areas of weakness regarding SRE topics.  |   |                                |

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| situation.   |   |  |
| Both thought the Sense CD would improve sexual communication within the family.        | Both thought the Sense CD would improve sexual communication within other families.   | The multimedia program was found to improve sexual communications within the family.   |
| After using the CD the daughter would now use computers to learn about sexual matters. | Both would use the CD to educate themselves about sexual matters and learn the different types of terminology that young people get embarrassed about if they don't know. | Using the multimedia program would allow parents and their children to become more informed of sexual facts that if not know leads to embarrassment. |
| Daughter would use CD rather than mum to learn SRE.                                    | Daughter would rather talk to mum, rather than use the CD, but would use the CD to learn aspects of SRE together.   | The multimedia program was useful for children to learn about sexual matters when they felt they were not able to talk to their own parents.         |

### **To investigate the following based on interviews 3 and 4**

- How SRE was taught to parents – e.g. which parent did they talk to about sexual matters and why?
- Was SRE taught to parents accurate? Did parents learn from listening to other peoples conversations? What age did parents have the SRE knowledge needed? How could it have been improved?
- How SRE was taught to child - e.g. at school and at home? Is it embarrassing to discuss sexual matters? Why?
- Parental communication – e.g. more SRE given to different genders? Why?
- Level of SRE taught by parents
- Age SRE is taught by parents – e.g. restrictions of discussing sexual matters openly within the family?
- Initiation of SRE
- Do parents feel they have the most up-to-date SRE to teach their children about sexual matters?
- Parent observation and teaching SRE at the right time
- Parental attitudes and impact on child – e.g. gays
- Impact of religion on parents and furthermore their children
- Media impact on child's SRE education
- Impact of the Sense CD on reducing barriers for families to discuss SRE.

### **Main categories from the generated themes after 4 interview sessions**

- ❖ **SRE taught to adolescents**
- ❖ **SRE taught to parents**
- ❖ **Parental communication of SRE with their children**
- ❖ **Media impact on SRE within the family**
- ❖ **Impact of the multimedia program on reducing barriers for discussing SRE within the family**
- ❖ **Effects of religion on discussing SRE in the family context**

| <b>Family # 5<br/>Mother (40) &amp; Son (12)</b>  | <b>Family # 6<br/>Mother (36), Daughters 1 (13) and 2 (16)</b>   | <b>Open Coding</b>        | <b>Axial Coding</b>   | <b>Selective Coding</b> |
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| <b>SRE taught to Adolescents</b>  |  |                           |   |                         |
| Taught SRE in year 8 (12-13 years old) - Taught by form teacher.  | Daughters were taught SRE taught from year 7 (11-12 years old) – Taught by school nurse or outside visitor.  | SRE taught to adolescents | Is the different SRE provided at school associated with religious beliefs?                                  | Formal SRE              |
| SRE included NO information on contraception and STIs – Catholic school.  | Daughters 1 & 2 - SRE included information on contraception and STIs – Non-faith school.   | SRE taught to adolescents | When are children who attend faith schools suppose to get SRE information?                                  | Effects of religion     |
| Gave NO signposting of where to go for further information or advice.   | Gave signposting of where to go for further information or advice.   | SRE taught to adolescents | Where are children who attend faith schools suppose to get SRE information?                                 | Effects of religion     |
| Received no SRE that included relationships.  | Received no SRE that included relationships.   | SRE taught to adolescents | Why does SRE not include relationships?   | Formal SRE              |
| Does not talk to friends about sexual matters.  | Daughter 1 does not talk to friends about sexual matter but will talk to her sister or mum if she needs to know something. Daughter 2 talks to her friends mostly about sexual matters because they are experiencing the same things as her. | SRE taught to adolescents | Are girls more likely to talk to their friends about SRE matters than boys? Why is this? What is discussed? | SRE and friends         |
| Son learns SRE mostly from school.  | Daughter 1 learns SRE mostly from school. Daughter 2 learns SRE mostly from friends, but also her mum and the Internet.  | SRE taught to adolescents | Is this SRE satisfactory?   | SRE provided at school  |
| Parent feels young people need better SRE that is continuously reinforced within school over a longer period of time. | Parent feels young people need better SRE that is continuously reinforced within school over a longer period of time.  | SRE taught to adolescents | What changes need to be made to provide better SRE?   | Quality of SRE given    |

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| Mother unsure of SRE taught to her son.  | Mother unsure of SRE taught to her daughters and feels parents need to be told what SRE is taught and when it is delivered so they can reinforce the sex education at home. | SRE taught to adolescents                          | What can schools do to contribute towards SRE being discussed at home?       | Quality of SRE given                                |
| Mother not informed that SRE was being taught to her son.  | Mother not informed that SRE was being taught to her daughters.   | SRE taught to adolescents                          | Why are parents not informed?  | Formal SRE  |
| Mother received poor sex education due to Catholic upbringing.   | Mother had poor sex education because her mum died when she was really young.   | SRE taught to Parents                              | To what extent did religion prevent parents from learning about SRE matters? | Effects of religion on discussing SRE in the family |
| Mother of parent followed the Catholic faith and therefore SRE was limited for the parent. JUST SAY NO!  | Mother of parent died when she was 16 and was not able to talk to her father about SRE.   | SRE taught to Parents                              | How did parents learn about SRE matters?                                     | Quality of SRE given                                |
| Mother learnt sex education through her gran and friends.  | Mother learnt sex education from her friends.   | SRE taught to Parents                              | What SRE topics did they still want to know more about?                      | Learnt SRE from same-sex people                     |
| Mother would have liked to have been informed more about feelings and growing-up and listened to other people's conversations to learn about these issues. | Mother would have liked to have been more informed about sexual matters and listened to other people's conversations to learn about these issues.                           | SRE taught to Parents                              | Who did parents want to teach them more about sexual matters?                | SRE improvements                                    |
| Received no SRE that included relationships.   | Received no SRE that included relationships.  | SRE taught to Parents                              | How did parents learn?   | Lack of SRE   |
| Mother started talking to her friends about 13 years old, but did not feel she knew about SRE until 18 years old.  | Mother started talking to her friends about 13 years old, but still wanted to know things at about 16 when her mum died.  | SRE taught to Parents                              | Did parents experience things to know about SRE?                             | Quality of SRE given                                |
| Communication – Son does not talk to his mother about SRE matters.   | Communication – Daughter 1 does not talk much to her mother about SRE. Daughter 2 talks to her mother often about SRE.  | Parental communication and SRE with their children | What aspects could increase sexual communications?                           | Positive communications                             |
| Son would talk to his uncle about SRE or his older cousin, but not his mum.  | Daughters would not talk to their father about SRE topics.  | Parental communication and SRE with their children | Why not discuss SRE with fathers?  | Absence of fathers                                  |

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| Would talk to his uncle or cousin because they understand being the same-sex.  | Talks to their mother because they understand being the same-sex.  | SRE taught to adolescents                          | Are the opposite-sex parents not understanding? Why?                                    | Gender specific SRE conversations                       |
| Son feels embarrassed talking to mother about SRE.   | Daughters do not feel embarrassed talking to mother about SRE topics, but they do feel embarrassed talking about their personal relationships. | Parental communication and SRE with their children | What aspects of personal relationships are embarrassing to discuss?                     | Embarrassment associated with discussing sexual matters |
| Son prefers teacher to teach him about SRE because he is anonymous and not singled out.  | Daughter 1 prefers the school to teach her about SRE.<br>Daughter 2 prefers her mum, school or to use the Internet to teach her about SRE.     | SRE taught to adolescents                          | Does gender affect children's preference for learning about SRE?                        | SRE provided at school                                  |
| Mother has briefly talked to her son about puberty but feels he does not need to know about sex until he is about 12 years of age because he won't understand. | Mother has talked to her daughters about sex from the age of 8 to 9 years of age.  | Parental communication and SRE with their children | Why does age differ between genders?  | Preliminary age of SRE conversations                    |
| Mother <b>tells</b> son about SRE topics.  | Mother <b>discusses</b> SRE topics with daughters.   | Parental communication and SRE with their children | Does the way parents approach SRE deter sexual communications?                          | Manner in which SRE was discussed                       |
| Mother talks to son about safety aspects associated with SRE.  | Mother talks to daughters about all aspects of SRE.  | Parental communication and SRE with their children | Differences in SRE conversations between genders  | Parental responsibility                                 |
| Mother wants son to have better SRE than she had.  | Mother wants daughters to have better SRE than she had.  | Parental communication and SRE with their children | What are the reasons for parents wanting better SRE for their children?                 | Positive communications                                 |
| Mother feels she and her son have a trusting relationship but do not talk openly about SRE topics.   | Mother and daughters feel they have a trusting relationship and feel they do talk openly about SRE topics.                                     | Parental communication and SRE with their children | What factors allow children have a close/trusting relationship more with their mothers? | Positive relations with mother                          |



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| Mother thought young people are more open about sexual matters compared to when they were young.   | Mother thought young people are more open about sexual matters compared to when they were young.  | Media impact on SRE within the family                                | Why has discussing SRE become the norm?  | SRE the norm  |
| Mother does not think SRE is any different today compared to when she was taught.  | Mother does not think that SRE is taught any different taught today compared to when she was taught.  | SRE taught to adolescents  | Has formal SRE improved or is sex just discussed more?                                       | Formal SRE  |
| Mother thinks that with her and her son living at home with the grandmother that this can sometimes restrict conversations concerning SRE with her son, however she feels that sometimes it can help, but it does hinder mother/ son communications. | Mother thinks that with her having a younger daughter that this can sometimes restrict conversations concerning SRE with her older daughters. | Parental communication and SRE with their children                   | How do families overcome barriers that prevent open sexual communications within the family? | Restrictions  |
| Media can be too explicit when teaching SRE.   | Media can be too explicit for young children (10 and under) but good in generating topics for discussion with older daughters.                | Media impact on SRE within the family                                | What aspects of SRE do parents not want their children to see/ know about?                   | Positive/ negative effects of the media?                    |
| Mother and son only watch television programmes with sexual content when the mother/ gran is not in the house.   | Mother and older daughters often watch television programmes together that can and do contain sexual content.                                 | Media impact on SRE within the family                                | Which programmes aid in sexual communications?   | Contribution of media sources                               |
| Son uses the Internet/ computers to educate himself about sexual matters.  | Both daughters use the Internet/ computers to educate themselves about sexual matters.  | Media impact on SRE within the family                                | What sites teach SRE matters?  | Contribution of media sources                               |
| Son does not read magazines to learn about issues concerning sexual matters.   | Both daughters read girly magazines to learn about issues concerning sexual matters.  | Media impact on SRE within the family                                | Are there gender differences?  | Positive/ negative effects of the media                     |
| <b>Impact of religion on discussing SRE within the family</b>  |   |  |  |   |
| Being brought up in a strict Catholic family has prevented the mother from learning about SRE matters.   | Mother does not think religion affects or impacts on the SRE that people learn about.   | Effects of religion on discussing SRE in the family                  | What aspects of SRE do religions omit?   | Effects of religion   |
| Mother thought the CD should be made available and be accessible in school and in youth centres.   | Mother thought the CD should be made available and be accessible in school and in youth centres.  | Impact of multimedia program on reducing barriers for discussing SRE | How do schools contribute to SRE being discussed within the home environment?                | SRE provided at school → positive SRE conversations at home |

| Impact of multimedia program on reducing barriers for discussing SRE within the family                     |   |   |
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| Both thought the CD was good, informative and gave facts that young people needed to know.                 | Both thought the CD was good, informative and gave facts that young people needed to know.  | The multimedia program was reported as offering the information and facts that young people would like to know about  |
| Mother thought the CD was good for 14 year olds and upwards, but the son didn't have an opinion.           | Mother thought CD suitable for 11 onwards, but could be used as young as 8/9 years to teach children. Daughter 1 thought the CD was good for 13 years and upwards because it covers relationships, but daughter 2 thought the CD would be good for young people from the age of 11. | There were variations in the age group the multimedia program was most suited for. However, the Catholic parent rated a higher age group than non-faith family members. Could this possibly be due to her believing that her son does not need to know about sexual matters with him starting puberty later than that of girls? |
| Both thought that the 'buzzwords' were good as it told you slang terms as well as the correct terminology. | Mother thought the CD was good in that it gave facts, whereas daughter 1 liked the characters and the layout whereas daughter 2 liked it because it has lots of sections.   | It would appear that the multimedia program was useful in giving not just the facts, but appealing to young people because of the variety and presentation of the CD.   |
| Son would rather use the CD to learn about SRE rather than talk to his mum.                                | Both daughters would use the CD but also wanted to talk to their mum to learn about SRE.  | It would appear that where children do not talk to their parent(s) about sexual matters the multimedia program was the preferred source for learning about sexual matters.  |
| Mother thought the CD would be good in allowing families to talk more openly about sexual issues.          | All thought the CD would be good in allowing families to talk more openly about sexual matters.   | It was agreed that the multimedia program would be a useful source for encouraging families to discuss sexual matters more openly within the family.  |
| Both thought the CD was really good and that it was set out well.  | Both daughters thought the CD was good and informative. Mother thought it was excellent and would use it with her younger child.  | It was reinforced how useful the multimedia program could be and why young people would use it.   |
| Son liked the 'true and false' and thought that fly was good.  | Both daughters liked the 'virtual clinic' and the 'true and false' sections.  | Young people seemed to like the section where they were challenged and learnt the most.   |
| There were numerous topics in the CD that the mother and son had not discussed as a family.                | The only topic in the CD that they have not really talked about is about the boy's body parts; simply just because it is not so relevant to them with being females.  | The multimedia program was useful as it highlighted the various SRE topics that parents and their children had not discussed as a family.   |
| Both thought the Sense CD would improve sexual communication within the family.                            | Both thought the Sense CD would improve sexual communication within the family.   | All felt that the multimedia program would be useful in removing barriers for not discussing sexual matters within the family.  |
| Mother thought the CD allowed young people to learn about sex at   | Both thought the CD allowed young people to learn about sexual matters at   | Parents felt that the multimedia program allowed for children to learn about sexual matters at their own level based on their own   |

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| an individual level.  | their own pace.  | understanding.  |
| After using the CD the son said that there are some aspects of SRE that he would now talk to his mum about, but would still want to use the CD rather than books to learn about SRE topics. | Both daughters would use the CD, but would still talk to their mum about SRE topics. | The multimedia program was reported as increasing sexual communications between parents and their children. |

### **To investigate the following based on interviews 5 and 6**

- How SRE was taught to parents – e.g. which parent did they talk to about sexual matters and why?
- Was SRE taught to parents accurate? Did parents learn from listening to other peoples conversations? What age did parents have the SRE knowledge needed? How could it have been improved?
- How SRE was taught to child - e.g. at school and at home? Is it embarrassing to discuss sexual matters? Why?
- Parental communication – e.g. more SRE given to different genders? Why?
- Level of SRE taught by parents
- Age SRE is taught by parents – e.g. restrictions of discussing sexual matters openly within the family? Overcome, how?
- Initiation of SRE – e.g. when are SRE conversations likely to occur?
- Do parents feel they have the most up-to-date SRE to teach their children about sexual matters?
- Parent observation and teaching SRE at the right time
- Parental attitudes and impact on child – e.g. gays
- Impact of religion on parents and furthermore their children
- Media impact on child's SRE education
- Impact of the Sense CD on reducing barriers for families to discuss SRE.

### **Main categories from the generated themes after 6 interview sessions**

- ❖ **SRE taught to adolescents**
- ❖ **SRE taught to parents**
- ❖ **Parental communication of SRE with their children**
- ❖ **Media impact on SRE within the family**
- ❖ **Impact of the multimedia program on reducing barriers for discussing SRE within the family**
- ❖ **Effects of religion on discussing SRE in the family context**

| Family # 7<br>Mother (37) & Son (12)  | Family # 8<br>Mother (44), Father (47), Son (15)<br>and Daughter (13)  | Open Coding               | Axial Coding   | Selective Coding  |
|---|--|---------------------------|--|---|
| <b>1) SRE Taught to Adolescents</b>   |  |                           |  |   |
| Taught SRE in year 8 - Taught by science teacher. Taught in a class of about 30, which was mixed-sex.   | Daughter - SRE taught in year 8 – Taught by teacher as part of a class of 30 who were not mixed by sex. Son – SRE taught in year 9 – Taught by school nurse.   | SRE taught to adolescents | Why is SRE taught differently to pupils?   | SRE provided at school  |
| SRE included NO information on contraception and STIs.  | Son had SRE that included information on contraception and STIs. Daughter had no SRE that included information on contraception and STIs.  | SRE taught to adolescents | Why is no SRE given after this time?   | SRE provided at school  |
| Gave NO signposting of where to go for further information or advice.   | Gave NO signposting of where to go for further information or advice.  | SRE taught to adolescents | Where will children learn about clinics if schools do not tell them?                   | Catholic school – Effects of religion   |
| Even after receiving SRE at school there are still things he would like to have known more about, but he talked to his mother about these sexual. | Even after receiving SRE at school if there are still things that they need to know both the on and daughter would just talk to their parents, mainly same sex parent.   | SRE taught to adolescents | What things did schools not teach children about?                                      | Quality of SRE given  |
| Received no SRE that included relationships - learns this from his mother.  | Son & Daughter - Received no SRE that included relationships - learns this from their parents.   | SRE taught to adolescents | Why did schools not incorporate relationships into SRE?                                | SRE provided at school  |
| <u>Does not get embarrassed when talking about SRE topics with people he knows.</u>   | Daughter does get embarrassed talking to people about sexual matter because she is frightened they will laugh at her for not knowing or being able to say the words correctly. <u>Son does not get embarrassed when talking about SRE topics with his parents.</u> | SRE taught to adolescents | Why do children get embarrassed?<br>Is age a factor?<br>Is lack of knowledge a factor? | Embarrassment associated with discussing sexual matters comes from lack of knowledge? |
| Does not discuss sexual matters with his friends.   | Son sometimes discusses puberty changes and girls with his same-sex friends, but does not learn anything, just joking around.<br>Daughter does not talk about SRE with friends, but it is just talked about in a joking way.                                       | SRE taught to adolescents | What do children learn about sexual matters through talking to their friends?          | SRE and friends   |

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| Son learns SRE mostly from school.  | Son and daughter learn the biological side of SRE from school but all other things associated with SRE from parents.  | SRE taught to adolescents | What aspects of SRE are not taught at school?                                    | Formal SRE                           |
| Mother feels that the SRE taught today, compared to her sex education is better, but far from sufficient for what young people need or want to know.  | Mother and father feel SRE is better these days compared to when they were younger.   | SRE taught to adolescents | How would parents prefer SRE to be taught to their children?                     | Quality of SRE                       |
| Mother feels that today's SRE needs to be staggered over the year and reinforced so <i>"Young people are furnished with the knowledge, rather than dabbling in things and consequently making mistakes"</i> . | Mother and father feel that SRE should be taught in small groups so young people get the opportunity to ask questions without getting embarrassed.  | SRE taught to adolescents | Do schools consider parents and children's views when teaching SRE?              | Formal SRE                           |
| Mother not informed through correct channels as to the SRE that is being taught to her son.   | Mother and father are not informed of the content that is taught as part of SRE sessions their children receive at school.  | SRE taught to adolescents | Why do schools not inform parents of what, and when SRE is taught?               | Formal SRE                           |
| Mother feels SRE needs to be taught to young people at an early age, especially puberty aspects which need to be taught at primary school.  | Mother feels SRE needs to be taught to young people at an early age, especially puberty aspects which need to be taught from as young as 9 or 10 years old.   | SRE taught to adolescents | What SRE is taught to children at primary and secondary school?                  | Preliminary age of SRE conversations |
| Mother received poor sex education at school due to her Catholic upbringing. This was not taught until the age of 14.   | Mother had NO sex education at school due to her Catholic upbringing - treating the topic as taboo.<br>Father received poor sex education at school regardless of his religion being Church of England.                                 | SRE taught to parents     | What factors apart from religion affected better SRE being taught?               | Effects of religion                  |
| Mother received little SRE and was not taught about the emotional side or coping strategies associated with development; however this was given from her mother in the family environment.                    | Mother and father received little SRE that talked about the emotional side or coping strategies associated with development; however for the father (only) this was given from his mother in the family environment from the age of 12. | SRE taught to parents     | Differences in the way SRE was taught in faith and non-faith – Has this changed? | Quality of SRE given                 |

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| Thought aspects of growing-up were “SCARY” as there was no reassurance given to what was normal when the body and emotions develops.                       | Mother felt there was NO reassurance given by family or the school about what she was going through during puberty which was quite normal.  | SRE taught to parents                               | How were parents suppose to know about SRE matters if they were not taught?  | SRE provided at school                                  |
| Mother of parent talked openly about sexual matters from an early age within the family, despite being a strong Catholic believer.                         | Parents of the mother did not talk to her about sex, hence did NOT discuss sexual matters openly within the family. Mother of the father talked openly about sexual matters to her son before she died, however his step-father never discussed sexual matters with his son as father thinks he would have been embarrassed to do so. | Effects of religion on discussing SRE in the family | Is it that parents who talked to their parents feel they have the skills and knowledge to talk openly with their own children? | Historical family context                               |
| Looking back the mother feels the SRE that was given was not always accurate as people were embarrassed to talk about sex.                                 | Mother feels that she did not receive good sex education from her parents as they were embarrassed to discuss it, just as with her husband’s step-father.   | SRE taught to parents                               | Did people get embarrassed talking about sexual matters because they did not know the facts?                                   | Embarrassment associated with discussing sexual matters |
| Mother would have liked to have been informed more about feelings and growing-up and listened to other people’s conversations to learn about these issues. | Mother listened to other people’s conversations to learn about sexual issues however, she feels she still did not understand the basics about sex and sexual matters.   | SRE taught to parents                               | What did parents learn by listening to other people’s conversations?   | Lack of parental knowledge                              |
| Mother only felt she had sufficient SRE knowledge after leaving school.  | Mother still doesn’t feel she has sufficient knowledge of SRE as she was not taught the basics when she was younger. Father thinks he has sufficient knowledge of SRE topics after being told by his mother when he was younger.  | SRE taught to parents                               | Did parents learn about sexual matters through experiences as they got older?  | Lack of parental knowledge                              |
| Mother feels more SRE was taught to girls as it did not apply to boys and therefore they did not need to know – “SMALL-MINDEDNESS”.                        | Son thinks more SRE is taught to girls than boys, but other family members did not have a view.   | SRE taught to parents                               | How are boys suppose to learn about girl’s experiences if they are not taught?   | Formal SRE  |

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| Communication – Son prefers his parents to teach him about SRE, in particular his mother.  | Communication – Daughter prefers to talk to her mother about SRE, whereas son talks to his mother and father, equally.  | Parental Communication & SRE with Their Children | Why is it this parent(s) who communicates SRE?  | Positive relations with mother and influence of joint parents |
| Son prefers to talk to his mother because he trusts her and knows she will keep SRE topics they discuss private.   | Son talks to both parents and daughter talks to her mother. This is mainly because they can trust their parents not to share the topics they discuss with other people.   | Parental Communication & SRE with Their Children | What has allowed these SRE conversations to take place?   | Positive communications                                       |
| Son feels more comfortable talking to his mum, rather than his dad because he spends more time with her and trusts her more. Son feels that his <i>'Dad would not talk about sex properly'</i> . | Daughter prefers to talk to her mother because she understands being the same-sex.<br>Son talks to both parents; father because he understands being the same-sex and mother because she talks about the emotional side of SRE.   | Parental Communication & SRE with Their Children | Does the absence of fathers increase SRE conversations with mothers? What other factors inhibit father/ children discussions? | Absence of fathers  |
| <u>Son feels that if he talked to his dad about SRE topics he would not be understanding and would take things the wrong way.</u>  | Son feels he can talk to his dad because he understands.<br>Daughter talks to her mother because she understands what she is going through being the same-sex.  | Parental Communication & SRE with Their Children | Why do children think their father would not understand? Factors?   | Positive relations with mother and influence of joint parents |
| Mother talked about reproduction with her son since he was about 5 or 6 years old, due to the sons' interest in nature and cells.  | Mother is keen for her children to know about things associated with SRE from an early age, and at a time they want to know about issues but only started discussing sexual matters seriously with their son and daughter about the age of 10/11 years old, when they wanted to know about things they had heard or seen. | Parental Communication & SRE with Their Children | Parents talk to their children about SRE matters from a young age does this increase sexual communications                    | Preliminary age of SRE conversations                          |
| Mother is open with her son about sexual matters as she wants to give him the correct information, so he has the facts and information to make informed choices of his own.                      | Mother and father are open with their children about sexual matters as they want to give him the correct information and have better sex education that they had.   | Parental Communication & SRE with Their Children | Do parents want better SRE for their children so don't make the mistakes they possibly did when they were younger?            | Historical family context                                     |



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| <u>Son does not feel embarrassed talking to mother about SRE.</u>   | <u>Son does not feel embarrassed talking about sexual matters.</u><br>Daughter sometimes feels embarrassed talking about sexual matters because of lack of confidence associated with not being able to say the correct terminology.   | Parental Communication & SRE with Their Children | Who do children get embarrassed with when talking to people?   | Embarrassment associated with discussing sexual matters   |
| <u>NO Father present within family home but son feels he could ask his dad questions about SRE, but feel he wouldn't be as understanding like his mother is.</u>      | Son is able to talk to his father about sex, but daughter prefers to just talk to her mum mostly.  | Parental Communication & SRE with Their Children | Does lack of time spent with children prevent fathers from being involved?   | Exclusion of father                                       |
| Mother thinks that son talks to her more about SRE due to her nurturing role; closer to off-spring and is more reassuring in the child's time of need as he grows up. | Mother thinks that her children talk to her most about sexual matters because she is always there in the nurturing role, whereas father thinks they talk to her more as she spends more time with them, especially at the times the children are most likely to talk about things, such as at mealtimes or when they come home from school.  | Parental Communication & SRE with Their Children | If fathers were to spend more time with their children would this increase the ability to talk more openly about sexual matters? | Positive relations with mother and absence of fathers     |
| Mother thinks SRE is taught very differently today compared to when she was taught.   | Mother and father think that SRE is taught very differently today compared to when they was taught.  | SRE taught to adolescents                        | How would parents prefer SRE to be taught?   | Quality of SRE given                                      |
| Mother feels she has a grounded knowledge of SRE to teach her son about sexual matters.   | Mother still doesn't feel she has sufficient knowledge as she was not taught the basics when she was younger however, she does feel she is able to teach and steer her children about the emotional and relationship aspects associated with sex and sexual decision making. Father thinks he has sufficient knowledge to teach his children about sexual matters. Mother and father combined feel they have the knowledge and experience to teach their children about all aspects associated with SRE however, if they didn't know something they would work together to give their children the correct information needed. | Parental Communication & SRE with Their Children | What more can be done to provide parents with the up-to-date knowledge to teach their children?                                  | Lack of parental knowledge and influence of joint parents |

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| Mother thinks that the only restriction on her and her son when discussing sexual matters would be if people were in the house however, there is plenty of opportunity for them to discuss sexual matters together. | Mother and father think that having younger children may restrict SRE conversation being discussed at particular times however; they would raise the subject again when they could discuss things without any disturbances. | Parental Communication & SRE with Their Children    | What are the consequences associated with the restrictions for discussing SRE matters?          | Restrictions                            |
| Mother thinks they are the exception rather than the rule of Catholic families when discussing sexual matters in that they talk very openly about SRE topics.   | Mother thinks that even though they are part of the Catholic religion they still discuss SRE openly within the family, which is not the norm, especially when compared to her own family.                                   | Effects of religion on discussing SRE in the family | What other factors allow SRE to become the norm?  | SRE the norm                            |
| Mother thinks the media can sometimes be too stereotypical, and does not show the consequences of sexual relationships, but instead 'glamorises' sexual topics.   | Mother feels the media are responsible for a lot of the negativity young people feel when not being able to fit into a stereotypical image.   | Media Impact on SRE Within the Family               | What sexual messages do children take away from media sources?                                  | Positive/ negative effects of the media |
| Mother and son watch television programmes with sexual content but son does not think he learns from the TV, but it generates conversations with his mother.  | Son and daughter watch soap opera that contain sexual matters and learn from these as to what to do in certain situations.  | Media Impact on SRE Within the Family               | What are boys/ girls learning from the media that they are not taught about at school and home? | Media influences                        |
| Son prefers to learn SRE from his mother and through school, rather than the media.   | Daughter uses computers to educate herself about sexual matters, whereas the son will use books.  | Media Impact on SRE Within the Family               | How do these media sources contribute to SRE conversations within the family?                   | Contribution of media sources           |
| Mother thinks that the parent's religion can have an impact on the level of SRE taught to their children.   | Mother thinks that the parent's religion can have an impact on the level of SRE taught to their children.   | Effects of religion on discussing SRE in the family | How do parents overcome the affects religion have on the family?                                | Effects of religion                     |

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| Mother thinks that Catholic schools <i>'Let children share the act, but not the consequence'</i> in relation to SRE.   | Mother and father think that regardless of what religion they are part of it is important that their children learn the values and morals associated with aspects of SRE to prepare them for adult life.   | Effects of religion on discussing SRE in the family  | Is religion as unimportant to parents as it is to children when learning about SRE matters?            | Unimportance of religion |
| Although the Catholic school ethos does not permit the discussion of contraception and how to access it, the mother gives this information to her son so he can be informed. | Although the Catholic school ethos does not permit the discussion of contraception and how to access it, the mother gives this information to her son so he can be informed.   | Effects of religion on discussing SRE in the family  | Why do parents send their children to faith schools when knowing the consequences?                     | Quality of SRE given     |
| Mother has concerns over how the Catholic school implicates and impacts on young people's sexual health.   | Mother not sure what SRE is taught at Catholic school her children attend, however she makes sure they know as much SRE information as possible, regardless of if the school believe it should not be taught.  | Effects of religion on discussing SRE in the family  | How do parents overcome the lack of SRE at faith schools if they do not know what is not being taught? | Effects of religion      |
| Son thinks that religion has an impact on the SRE he receives, however he learns about all the things from his mum that the school do not teach him.                         | Son thinks religion has an impact on what SRE knowledge he is given or asks for, however he would just ask his mum or dad instead.<br>Daughter did not have an opinion.  | Effects of religion on discussing SRE in the family  | Do Catholic schools differ in the SRE information they give to children?                               | Formal SRE               |
| <b>Impact of the multimedia programme on reducing barriers for not discussing SRE within the family</b>  |  |  |  |                          |
| Both thought the CD was good, and that it was a fun way to learn about a serious and sensitive topic.  | All thought the CD was good, informative and gave facts that young people needed to know.  | Overall, family members thought the multimedia program was good and gave sexual information in a fun way, rather than formally like at school. |  |                          |
| Both thought that the <i>'buzzwords'</i> were good as it told you slang terms as well as the correct terminology.  | Son thought the CD was good in the way it taught SRE in that it did not just give the facts, but it told you how and why. Father liked the depth that it covered body parts as it covers more than just the facts about the different parts. Daughter liked the puberty section and the way she understood it when going through it with her mother. | The multimedia program was purposeful in that it gave the facts and that it covered the slang terms that young people are familiar with.       |  |                          |

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| Mother thought the CD should be made available and accessible in school and in youth centres.                        | Mother had discussed all contents of CD with her two eldest children, just at a level they understand.   | Mothers thought that the multimedia program should be made available at school and informal settings.  |
| Son would rather use the CD to learn about the facts of SRE, but then talk to his mum to get a better understanding. | Both children would use the CD to learn about SRE matters, but would also talk to their parents as well. | Children would prefer to get the facts and a baseline of SRE knowledge so they can ask parents information based on the things they want to know more about. |
| Mother thought the CD would be good in allowing families to talk more openly about sexual issues.                    | All thought the CD would be good in allowing families to talk more openly about sexual matters.          | All felt that the multimedia program would be useful in removing barriers for not discussing sexual matters openly within the family.                        |
| Mother thinks the CD has raised issues that her and her son had not discussed.                                       | Mother thinks the CD raised questions that allowed for sexual communications within the family.          | The multimedia program was reported as increasing sexual communications between parents and their children.  |

### **To investigate the following based on interviews 7 and 8**

- How SRE was taught to parents – e.g. which parent did they talk to about sexual matters and why?
- Was SRE taught to parents accurate? Did parents learn from listening to other peoples conversations? What age did parents have the SRE knowledge needed? How could it have been improved?
- How SRE was taught to child - e.g. at school and at home? Is it embarrassing to discuss sexual matters? Why?
- Parental communication – e.g. more SRE given to different genders? Why?
- Level of SRE taught by parents
- Age SRE is taught by parents – e.g. restrictions of discussing sexual matters openly within the family? Overcome, how?
- Initiation of SRE – e.g. when are SRE conversations likely to occur?
- Do parents feel they have the most up-to-date SRE to teach their children about sexual matters?
- Parent observation and teaching SRE at the right time
- Parental attitudes and impact on child – e.g. gays
- Impact of religion on parents and furthermore their children
- Media impact on child's SRE education

- Impact of the Sense CD on reducing barriers for families to discuss SRE.

**Main categories from the generated themes after 8 interview sessions**

- ❖ SRE taught to adolescents
- ❖ SRE taught to parents
- ❖ Parental communication of SRE with their children
- ❖ Media impact on SRE within the family
- ❖ Impact of the multimedia program on reducing barriers for discussing SRE within the family
- ❖ Effects of religion on discussing SRE in the family context

| <b>Family # 9 -Catholic<br/>Mother (40), Father (46) &amp; Son<br/>(13)</b>   | <b>Family # 10 - Catholic<br/>Mother (42), Father (45), Sons (13) &amp;<br/>(15)</b>   | <b>Open Coding</b>           | <b>Axial Coding</b>  | <b>Selective<br/>Coding</b>  |
|---|--|------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>1) SRE Taught to Adolescents</b>   |  |                              |  |  |
| Son taught SRE in year 8 -<br>Taught by teacher in a class of 30<br>pupils who were both boys and<br>girls (mixed).   | Both son's were given SRE when he was<br>aged 8/9 years – Taught by teacher as<br>part of a class of 20 boys.  | SRE taught to<br>adolescents | Why do schools<br>teach SRE<br>differently?<br>What do children<br>prefer?                             | SRE provided<br>at school  |
| SRE included reproduction and<br>basic information on puberty.  | SRE included information on puberty,<br>contraception and STIs.  | SRE taught to<br>adolescents | Why does SRE<br>not include<br>relationships?  | SRE provided<br>at school  |
| Gave NO signposting of where to<br>go for further information or<br>advice.   | Both sons - Teachers gave NO<br>signposting of where to go for further<br>information or advice, however, outside<br>visitors who were part of the sex<br>education roadshow did.          | SRE taught to<br>adolescents | Where are<br>children who<br>attend faith<br>schools suppose<br>to get SRE<br>information?             | Effects of<br>religion   |
| Son has mainly been taught about<br>sexual issues from his mum. This<br>is mainly because she is there<br>when he comes home from<br>school and she asks more<br>questions than her husband.                  | Both sons - SRE has been taught by<br>teachers and not parents because they are<br>too embarrassed to talk to their mother<br>and father about sexual matters,<br>especially their mother. | SRE taught to<br>adolescents | What factors<br>differ between<br>parents for not<br>discussing SRE<br>matters with<br>their children? | Positive<br>relations with<br>mother vs.<br>embarrassment<br>associated with<br>sexual matters |
| Son prefers parents to teach him<br>about sexual matters because they<br>are honest and because he trusts<br>them. They also provide a safe<br>and less serious environment for<br>discussing sexual matters. | Both sons – Prefer SRE to be given by<br>teachers, and not parents.  | SRE taught to<br>adolescents | Why do some<br>parents talk/ do<br>not talk to their<br>children about<br>sexual matters?              | Sexual<br>communications   |
| Son is not embarrassed to discuss<br>sexual matters with his parents.   | Both sons – Embarrassed to talk to<br>parents about sexual matters.  | SRE taught to<br>adolescents | What factors<br>make children<br>embarrassed<br>when talking to<br>their parents?                      | Embarrassment<br>associated with<br>sexual matters   |
| Prior to receiving SRE at school<br>mother had talked to her son<br>about the consequences of having<br>sex and discussed contraception<br>and STIs.  | Parents claim that they have talked to<br>both boys about puberty when they were<br>aged 5 and that both parents and children<br>would initiate SRE discussions.                           | SRE taught to<br>adolescents | If parents are<br>open talking<br>about sexual<br>matters is this<br>reciprocated by<br>children?      | Positive<br>communications   |

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| If son wanted to know more about what he had learnt at school he would talk to his parents.   | Both sons feel satisfied with the sex education they have had and there were NO aspects of SRE they wanted to know more about, especially not from their parents.   | SRE taught to adolescents | Does lack of parental knowledge affect whether children talk to their parents about SRE matters?   | Lack of parental knowledge  |
| Son discusses sexual matters with his friends, but will joke on about girls with his friends (same-sex), but will also talk to his girlfriend about sexual matters.   | Sons do not discuss sexual matters seriously with his friends. but will joke on about girls with his friends (same-sex), Claims not to learn anything from these conversations.                                     | SRE taught to adolescents | What do children learn about by talking to the opposite sex about SRE matters?                     | SRE and friends   |
| Father feels that the SRE taught today is probably not much different to what he got taught, however he is unaware what is taught to his son. Mother thinks that the SRE taught today is far better because people are now a lot more open. | Mother and father feel SRE is better these days compared to when they were younger – children are given much more information, especially regarding feelings and emotions associated with a sexual relationship.    | SRE taught to adolescents | Has formal SRE improved due to sexual matters being discussed more openly within society?          | Formal SRE  |
| Mother received poor sex education at school due to her Catholic upbringing. This was not taught until the age of 13/14. Father was given basic sex education at the age of 13/14.  | Mother – At age 14 she was told about periods and was also told how a baby was developed.<br>Father – At age 13 he was told the basics about sex.   | SRE taught to parents     | Was religion the only factor that prevented better SRE being given to parents?                     | Effects of religion   |
| Mother's parents did not talk about sexual matters with her possibly through embarrassment. Father's parents did not talk about sexual matters with him possibly through lack of knowledge themselves.                                      | Both parents were not told much about SRE from their parents as 'sex' was regarded as an embarrassing topic and father feels his parents also did not have the knowledge to discuss sexual matters openly with him. | SRE taught to parents     | Was SRE an embarrassing topic to discuss because people were embarrassed by not knowing the facts? | Lack of parental knowledge and embarrassment associated with sexual matters |
| Both parents talked to their friends about sexual matters, and the father learnt from his older sisters and information from  | Both parents talked to their friends to find out more about sexual matters and just picked-up information as they went along from magazines, mainly of a  | SRE taught to parents     | What did parents learn about talking and listening to other  | Lack of parental knowledge  |

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| pornographic magazines.   | pornographic nature for the father.  |  | people's conversations?  |   |
| Both parents agree that sex was not discussed openly within their family when they were younger as it was not the done thing within the fathers family and seen as a ' <i>dirty</i> ' word.                   | Both parents agree that sex was not discussed openly within their family when they were younger as it was not the done thing being part of that era – not the norm.                        | SRE taught to parents                            | Because SRE was not discussed openly when parents were younger does this prevent them from being open with their own children? | Historical family context                               |
| Mother feels the SRE that was given was not always accurate and feels she is still learning about sexual matters at 40.<br>Father feels he was in his 30s when he had a good understanding of sexual matters. | Mother – Felt she had adequate knowledge of SRE topics in her early 20s.<br>Father – Felt he has adequate knowledge of SRE topics in his late teens.                                       | SRE taught to parents                            | What were the main factors for parents not learning about sexual matters?  | Lack of parental knowledge                              |
| Mother would have liked to have been informed more about feelings and growing-up and listened to other people's conversations to learn about these things?  | Mother and father did not receive any SRE that included relationships or feelings.   | SRE taught to parents                            | How were parents to know about relationships, etc if they were not taught?   | Quality of SRE given                                    |
| Both parents feel they have the up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach their children about sexual matters.  | Both parents feel they have the up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach their children about sexual matters, but the mother finds it too much of an embarrassing topic to discuss with her sons. | SRE taught to parents                            | Does embarrassment prevent SRE conversations?  | Embarrassment associated with discussing sexual matters |
| <b>3) Parental Communication &amp; SRE with Their Children</b>  |  |  |  |   |
| Communication – Son prefers his parents to teach him about SRE, in particular his mother.   | Communication – Sons do not wish to speak to their parents about sexual matters, but if they had to they would talk to their father.   | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Does having a close relationship with children allow for SRE topics to be discussed?   | Positive relations with mother                          |
| Son talks to his mother more as she is the first parent he sees   | Sons would not talk to their mother about sexual matters because she gets  | Parental communication &                         | If parents are keen to initiate  | Positive relations with                                 |



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| when coming home from school and because she asks him questions about what he has been taught, which then in turn generates conversation and gives the mother the opportunity to elaborate and explain more to her son. | embarrassed and does not know enough about sex to teach them anything they don't already know from school.  | SRE with their children                          | SRE discussions does this encourage their children to reciprocate?                                       | mother vs. lack of parental knowledge and embarrassment with discussing sexual matters |
| Mother, father and son do not get embarrassed when discussing sexual matters and therefore feel they discuss sex openly within the family.  | Mother gets embarrassed as she does not understand the terminology young people use and that her sons discuss aspects of SRE more openly than she did when she was younger. | SRE taught to parents                            | If parents have an open relationship with their children does this reduce embarrassment factors?         | Embarrassment associated with discussing sexual matters                                |
| Mother feels it is important that her sons learn about sexual matters from a young age (5), whereas the father thinks that about 11/12 SRE should be taught when the body is changing.                                  | Mother feels it is important that her children learn about sexual matters when they are ready however, they have encouraged discussion from the age of 5.                   | Parental communication & SRE with their children | What factors have hindered parents from talking about SRE matters with their children from an early age? | Preliminary age of SRE conversations   |
| Parents are not aware of the SRE that is taught to their children at school.  | Parents not aware of the SRE that is taught to their children but assumes the school is teaching SRE to a high standard because of their son's knowledge base.              | SRE taught to adolescents                        | If schools do not inform parents of the SRE taught how are parents able to be prepared?                  | SRE provided at school   |
| All family members agree that as a family they do discuss sexual matters openly.  | All family members agree that as a family they do not discuss sexual matters openly.  | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Reasons as to why parents do/ do not talk to their parents about SRE matters                             | Positive communications  |
| Parents believe that their son will learn SRE issues from themselves, his friends and from  | Parents believe that their sons will learn SRE issues from their friends and the school.  | SRE taught to adolescents                        | Is this not similar as to how parents learnt about SRE   | Historical family context  |

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| female relationships.   |   |  | matters?  |   |
| No set circumstances when SRE matters are discussed, but they generally occur when son comes home from school, at the dinner table or when watching television. | If conversations on sexual matters were to occur it would more than likely be discussed in the kitchen at meal times or when watching television.   | Parental communication & SRE with their children       | If parents spend more time with their children are SRE discussions increased?           | Shared experiences and media influences |
| Mother would discuss any sexual topics with her son, but father would not discuss how oral and how gay sex takes place.   | Parents claim there are no sexual issues that they would not discuss with their children.   | Parental communication & SRE with their children       | What is the reason for not discussing certain SRE topics?                               | Influence of joint parents              |
| Mother thinks the media have a big impact over what SRE young people learn and the whole family think it is a good way to learn about sexual matters.           | Mother feels the media are good in giving the facts and consequences of sexual behaviour and that young people can relate to the messages the media are providing.  | Media impact on SRE within the family                  | What benefits children from learning from media sources?                                | Contribution of media sources           |
| Parents feel the media is a good tool that allows for conversations to be generated, especially in the soap operas.   | Parents feel the media is a good tool that allows for conversations to be generated, especially in the soap operas.   | Media impact on SRE within the family                  | Is there a differences between genders and media sources accessed?                      | Positive/negative effects of the media  |
| Son watches television programmes which show how people manage different situations regard sex and relationships.   | Sons watch soap operas that contain sexual matters and learn from the story lines as to what to do in certain situations.   | Media impact on SRE within the family                  | Do children relate to what they see and learn from media sources?                       | Media influences                        |
| Mother thinks that the parent's religion can have an impact on the level of SRE taught to some children, but they are not strict practising Catholics.          | Parents feel that their religion offers the values and morals to their children but does not hinder the sex education their children receive.   | Impact of religion on discussing SRE within the family | How do parents overcome the affects religion have on the family?                        | Effects of religion                     |
| Son believes that the Catholic religion at school affects the information that they provide.  | Oldest son believes that the Catholic religion has been restrictive on what SRE they learn. Feels it is a lot better for his younger brother than himself due to young teachers coming into the school who are younger and more up-to-date. | Impact of religion on discussing SRE within the family | Even though religion affects what children learn at school, they choose to find out the | Unimportance of religion                |

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|  |   |   | information themselves even though it goes against the family and school religious beliefs. |                      |
| Mother thinks that Catholic schools offer better education in some ways, but is keen to give the information to their children that they know the school is not providing such as contraception, STIs etc.   | Mother thinks that Catholic schools offer good sex education and assumes anything the school do not tell their children their sons will pick up from their friends.   | Impact of religion on discussing SRE within the family  | Why do parents send their children to faith schools when knowing the consequences?          | Quality of SRE given |
| <b>Impact of the multimedia program on reducing barriers for discussing SRE within the family</b>  |   |   |   |                      |
| All thought the CD was good and son felt he learnt a lot from exploring the CD with his parents.   | All thought the CD was good, informative and fun to use.  | Overall, family members thought the multimedia program was good and gave sexual information in a fun way, rather than formally like at school.  |   |                      |
| Family watched the CD together and parents taught the son about some of the long words he did not previously understand. All felt comfortable watching the CD together.  | Both sons refused to watch the CD with their parents; however when viewing it together as brothers they thought it was better to learn using the CD than how they are taught at school and thought the scenarios were good.   | The multimedia program was purposeful in that it gave the facts and helped with understanding and extending upon previous knowledge.  |   |                      |
| Mother thought the CD was good when using real characters in the scenarios.<br>Father thought the CD was good in that it covered a lot more about relationships.<br>Son thought it was well presented in a way that it would appeal to young people. | Youngest son thought the CD was good in that the scenarios allowed you to put yourself in the position of the actors.<br>Oldest son liked the story lines and how the fly would give additional information.<br>Mother liked the 'buzzwords' the most and the father thought the CD would be good for people who find it hard to discuss sexual issues. | Overall, all family members thought that the multimedia program had many positive aspects, especially for the young people as they could relate to the scenarios, which used real characters. |   |                      |
| Family thought the CD would be good to teach young people about sexual matters from the age of 11/12.  | Mother and father thought the CD would be good to teach about puberty, but father thought other aspects would be most useful from the age of 11.  | All agreed that the multimedia program would be useful for any children approaching puberty.  |   |                      |

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|  | Sons think the CD would be good to use from about the age of 10/11.   |  |
| All felt comfortable watching the CD as a family.  | Both sons felt uncomfortable watching the CD as a family however, parents claims they would not feel uncomfortable.   | It appeared that families who do not discuss sexual matters openly within the family that the multimedia program was uncomfortable to watch as a family.                             |
| The family feels there were no topics in the CD that they have not discussed as a family.              | All aspects of the CD have not been discussed by the sons and their parents.  | Parents who talk openly about sexual matters from a young age with their children had covered all aspects of the multimedia program.   |
| All agree that the CD would be useful in breaking down the barriers of discussing SRE within families. | Oldest son thinks that the CD would be useful in breaking down the barriers of discussing SRE with other families, but not theirs.<br>Parents would watch the CD as a family. | The multimedia program was reported to increase sexual communications within families, just not in family #10 where sons would not talk to their parents as it was too embarrassing. |

### **To investigate the following based on interviews 9 and 10**

- How SRE was taught to parents – e.g. which parent did they talk to about sexual matters and why?
- Was SRE taught to parents accurate? Did parents learn from listening to other peoples conversations? What age did parents have the SRE knowledge needed? How could it have been improved?
- How SRE was taught to child - e.g. at school and at home? Is it embarrassing to discuss sexual matters? Why?
- Parental communication – e.g. more SRE given to different genders? Why?
- Level of SRE taught by parents
- Age SRE is taught by parents – e.g. restrictions of discussing sexual matters openly within the family? Overcome, how?
- Initiation of SRE – e.g. when are SRE conversations likely to occur?
- Do parents feel they have the most up-to-date SRE to teach their children about sexual matters?
- Parent observation and teaching SRE at the right time
- Parental attitudes and impact on child – e.g. gays

- Impact of religion on parents and furthermore their children
- Media impact on child's SRE education
- Impact of the Sense CD on reducing barriers for families to discuss SRE.

### **Main categories from the generated themes after 10 interview sessions**

- ❖ **SRE taught to adolescents**
- ❖ **SRE taught to parents**
- ❖ **Parental communication of SRE with their children**
- ❖ **Media impact on SRE within the family**
- ❖ **Impact of the multimedia program on reducing barriers for discussing SRE within the family**
- ❖ **Effects of religion on discussing SRE in the family context**

## **APPENDIX 14**

### **Process and Structure of the Grounded Theory Method for families interviewed separately**

## Open, Axial and Selective Coding Process for Families 11-20

Any text in bold and underlined is duplicated as it refers to multiple sections.

Any text in red relates to the findings from the follow-up interview.

| Family # 11<br>Mother (51), Son 1 (16) + Son 2 (14)  | Family # 12<br>Mother (43) & Daughter (13)  | Open Coding               | Axial Coding   | Selective Coding       |
|--|---|---------------------------|--|------------------------|
| <b>1) SRE Taught to Adolescents</b>  |   |                           |  |                        |
| Son 1 & 2 - Taught SRE in year 6 (10-11 years) - Form teacher showed video detailing sex and pregnancy as well as discussing puberty. Re-capped in year 8 (12-13 years). In year 10 – Outside visitors delivered the sex education roadshow covering puberty, contraception, STIs and relationships. Re-capped in year 11 (15-16 years) by an outside visitor for son 1. Mother has a rough idea of what sex education is taught to her sons' but doesn't know when they received the education. | Daughter - SRE taught in year 6 (10-11 years) – Form teachers showed a video detailing puberty and aspects of hygiene – taught in single sex classes. In year 7 (11-12 years) school nurse gave single sex classes to teach puberty, contraception, STIs. In year 8 – Form teacher gave information on safe sex, contraception and puberty changes. Mother has a rough idea of what sex education has been taught to her daughter but doesn't know when they received the education or how they teach relationships | SRE taught to adolescents | Why do schools teach SRE differently?<br>What do children prefer?        | Formal SRE             |
| Gave signposting of where to go for further information or advice by outside visitors from the roadshow. Mother does not know if any sign posting was given to her sons'.  | Gave signposting of where to go for further information or advice by the school nurse. Mother does not know if any sign posting was given to her daughter.  | SRE taught to adolescents | Why do some schools not provide signposting and to what consequence      | SRE provided at school |
| School has taught both sons the most about SRE matters. Mother agrees that school has taught her sons' the most about SRE, and possibly their peers.   | Mother has taught daughter the most about SRE matters. Mother agrees that she has taught her daughter the most about SRE.   | SRE taught to adolescents | Mother teach SRE topics differently to sons/ daughters                   | SRE provided at school |
| Prefers school to teach SRE matters rather than their parents. Mother thinks her sons' prefer to be taught SRE at school and be peers because it is not  | Prefers mother and school to teach SRE matters. Mother prefers to teach her daughter about SRE matters so she knows that her daughter understands the information she is being told about.  | SRE taught to adolescents | Why do boys prefer to learn about formal SRE at school rather from their | Formal SRE             |

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| personalised and therefore not embarrassing.  |   |                           | parents?  |  |
| Teacher has initiated conversations regarding SRE matters. Mother feels sons have asked her things in the past but as a family they make a joke of it.  | Mother used to initiate conversations, but now the daughter also asks questions to her mum and nurse. Mother thinks she mainly initiates the SRE conversations, but her daughter has also asked questions.  | SRE taught to adolescents | Parents who initiate SRE conversations allows for children to feel comfortable reciprocating?   | Positive communications                                  |
| Both sons get embarrassed when discussing sexual matters with their parents. Mother finds any topic concerning sex embarrassing to talk about with her sons.  | Daughter does not get embarrassed discussing sexual matters with her mum. Mother does not find it embarrassing to discuss SRE matters, but feels her daughter may have been embarrassed on certain occasions.   | SRE taught to adolescents | Why do children get embarrassed talking about sexual matters?   | Embarrassment associated with discussing sexual matters. |
| There are no topics concerning sex that the sons get embarrassed talking about. It is just they get embarrassed when talking to their parents because their parents are uncomfortable and embarrassed when discussing sexual matters with them. Mother agrees that she gets embarrassed discussing sexual matters and feels it is because she has been brought-up viewing sex and sexual matters as an embarrassing topic to discuss. | There are no topics concerning sex that the daughter gets embarrassed talking about, regardless of who the person might be. In general does not feel SRE matters are embarrassing to discuss but feels her daughter may have been embarrassed on certain occasions.                           | SRE taught to adolescents | If parents are embarrassed talking about sexual matters does this make their children also embarrassed and therefore less reluctant to discuss sexual matters themselves? | Embarrassment associated with discussing sexual matters. |
| Started to learn about sexual matters from about 11 years old. Mother didn't get taught about sexual matters; instead she had to learn from her peers and other people's conversations.   | Started to learn about sexual matters from about 7 or 8 years old. Mother feels her daughter started to learn about sexual matters properly at about the age of 9 or 10, but had asked questions regarding reproduction earlier due to her interest in nature and watching nature programmes. | SRE taught to adolescents | Why do mothers talk to daughters about sexual matters younger than with their sons?   | Preliminary age of SRE conversations                     |
| Older son does not feel he has needed to ask more when being told about sexual matters, but son 1 sometimes has to explain things to his younger brother (son 2). Mother does not feel her sons   | Daughter feels she sometimes has to ask her mum or the teacher when she has not totally understood what she has been told. Mother thinks her daughter may want to know more about some things such as what it is like to have sex, but  | SRE taught to adolescents | Why don't we ask children what more they want to be taught rather than adults   | SRE provided at school                                   |



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| need to know more. If they did she would talk to them, but she feels they would probably go on the Internet to find out more.   | may get embarrassed when asking her mother about what actually goes on in her and her husbands' sex life.   |                           | governing SRE?   |  |
| Would prefer to be taught about sexual matters from someone who is young, has the knowledge and who does not get embarrassed when talking about sexual matters. Mother would prefer for her sons to learn about sex from someone they feel comfortable with.  | Would prefer to be taught about sexual matters from her mum because they are close and the school nurse because she has the correct information. Mother would prefer to teach her daughter about sexual matters so she gets the right information and understands what she is being told about.       | SRE taught to adolescents | What types of people teach SRE to young people? How can this be improved upon?     | Formal SRE and positive communications                   |
| Feels they pick things up when hearing details from other people's conversations.   | Feels she learns things when hearing details from other people's conversations.   | SRE taught to adolescents | Do we all not do this when learning?   | SRE as the norm  |
| Both sons do not really discuss sexual matters with their friends, but will discuss things with girlfriends. This is mainly due to curiosity. Mother has heard her sons talking with their friends about sexual matters and feels they discuss anything and everything to do with sex, girls, growing-up etc. | Daughter does discuss sexual matters with her friends. This is mainly because they are experiencing the same things. Mother thinks her daughter does discuss sexual matters with her friends, but does not feel the conversations are too deep and that they probably just have a laugh about things. | SRE taught to adolescents | What do children learn from their friends, especially friends of the opposite sex? | SRE and friends  |
| Both sons just want to learn what it is like for others their age and what they are experiencing?   | Mainly learn what it is like for other people when discussing sexual matters. Mother feels her daughter discusses sexual matters with her friends to get an idea about what it is really like to have sex and a relationship.   | SRE taught to adolescents | Why do children talk to their friends about sex?                                   | SRE and friends  |
| Mother told what happened to hamsters and that this was the same for humans.  | Mother received two sessions in secondary school that covered periods and pregnancy.  | SRE taught to parents     | Why was SRE so poor for parents?   | Quality of SRE given                                     |
| Neither of the mother's parents taught her about sexual matters. Mother showed her sanitary towels but gave no explanation of what they were for or how to use them.  | The mother mainly talked about sexual matters with her daughter. The father never discussed sexual matters because of embarrassment and because it was not part of his parenting role.  | SRE taught to parents     | What factors lead to parent's, parents when discussing sexual matters?             | Embarrassment associated with discussing sexual matters. |

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| The mother feels her parents did not have the knowledge to teach her SRE and were embarrassed to do so.                   | The mother feels her parents did not have the knowledge to teach her SRE and were embarrassed to do so.   | SRE taught to parents | Is this because parent's, parents were not told about the SRE facts?                        | Lack of parental knowledge                               |
| The mother's family did not talk openly about sexual matters due to embarrassment.  | The mother's family did not talk openly about sexual matters due to embarrassment.  | SRE taught to parents | Why were they embarrassed?  | Embarrassment associated with discussing sexual matters. |
| Learnt the most SRE from her friends.   | Learnt the most SRE from her friends, cousins and from what she had overheard in other people's conversations. Also learnt about SRE matters from the book her mother bought her.                           | SRE taught to parents | Is this the main way parents learnt about sexual matters?                                   | SRE and friends  |
| Sex education could have been improved just by it actually existing.  | Sex education could not have been improved at the time because people were so reluctant to discuss sexual matters because of the stigma associated with the topic.  | SRE taught to parents | How were parents suppose to learn SRE facts?  | Quality of SRE given                                     |
| SRE is far better these days and covers the things young people need to know about.                                       | SRE is far better these days and covers relationships. Does not agree that school nurses can aid in providing emergency contraception and taking your people to the services where they can have abortions. | SRE taught to parents | Parents need to be informed of the SRE taught to their children so they can supplement it   | Quality of SRE given and schools to inform parents       |
| Sex was not discussed when the mother was younger due to the embarrassment factor.  | Sex was not discussed when the mother was younger due to the embarrassment factor.  | SRE taught to parents | Has this embarrassment lead to parents becoming embarrassed when discussing sexual matters? | Embarrassment associated with discussing sexual matters. |
| Mother feels she has the up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach her sons, but it is her sons' that choose not to speak to her. | Mother feels she has the up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach her daughter.  | SRE taught to parents | How have parents learnt the SRE facts for themselves when they were not taught?             | Historical family context                                |

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| Both sons do not discuss sexual matters with either of their parent's because they will pry into their private lives and probably walk away laughing even if it was a serious conversation. Mother feels that if her sons did want to discuss SRE matters then they would go to her because the father is never around.          | Daughter mainly talks to her mum about sexual matters because she feels safe and can trust her not to repeat things to others. Mother feels her daughter talks more to her about sexual matters than her natural father or step-dad.                               | Parental communication and SRE with their children | If parents do not provide a safe, trusting and comfortable environment does this prevent SRE conversations from occurring?           | Invasion of privacy                                      |
| Father once tried to initiate the conversation regarding sexual matters, but failed miserably. Parents have initiated sexual discussions in the past, but in recent years her sons have also asked questions.  | Mother has generally initiated the conversation regarding SRE matters. Mother feels her daughter talks more to her because as a female herself she is better equipped to provide accurate information and give advice on what is likely to happen as she develops. | Parental communication and SRE with their children | Do boys and girls prefer to talk to the same-sex parent about sexual matters?  | Gendered experiences                                     |
| Conversation concerning sexual matters occurred on one occasion when coming home from school. Mother can remember only one time when her eldest son had watched a video in secondary school. The conversation was very embarrassing for mother, father and their son, hence why conversations like this have not occurred again. | Daughter discusses sexual matters at any time once she is alone with her mother. Mother feels discussions about SRE topics generally occur when making meals or from watching TV.  | Parental communication and SRE with their children | Does fathers not being present at the optimal times of SRE discussions distance him from sexual family communications in the future? | Absence of fathers                                       |
| Do not discuss sexual matters with parents because their parents get embarrassed. Mother admits to getting embarrassed when discussing sexual matters with her sons.   | Mother and daughter do not get embarrassed when discussing any sexual matters. Mother does not discuss her own sex life as she feels this is a personal and private matter, but will discuss any other SRE matter with her daughter.                               | Parental communication and SRE with their children | What aspects of SRE are embarrassing to discuss?   | Embarrassment associated with discussing sexual matters. |
| Both sons think the school will teach them about SRE when their parents don't. Mother thinks her sons' will learn from school and peers rather than from her or her husband.   | Daughter thinks the school nurse will teach about SRE if her mother doesn't. Mother thinks the school would teach her daughter the most about SRE matters if she didn't talk about SRE topics with her daughter.   | Parental communication and SRE with their children | Why do parents think their children will learn more about sexual matters at school?  | SRE provided at school                                   |

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| Both sons feel their parents lack the knowledge to teach SRE matters. Mother feels she has the knowledge to teach her sons' about sexual matters, but they prefer not to talk to her.  | Daughter feels her mother lacks the knowledge to teach SRE matters. Mother feels she has the knowledge to discuss aspects of SRE with her whist she is still only 13 years old, but is unsure whether she will have the knowledge for discussing topics that may get raised when her daughter gets older. | Parental communication and SRE with their children | What can be done to improve parents SRE knowledge?   | Lack of parental knowledge           |
| No restrictions on discussing SRE matters. Sons just choose not to. There are no restrictions on discussing SRE. Parents and their children just choose not to discuss it.   | Younger brother and sister can prevent mother and daughter from discussing SRE Matters. Mother feels her two younger children can restrict SRE conversations with her daughter.   | Parental communication and SRE with their children | How do families overcome the barriers of these restrictions?   | Human restrictions                   |
| Sons do not feel family talk openly about sexual matters. Mother does not feel the family talk openly about sexual matters.  | Daughter feels her family talk openly about sexual matters. Mother feels her family is open when discussing SRE matters when they arise, but they do not sit discussing sex all the time.   | Parental communication and SRE with their children | What main factors prevent sexual matters being discussed openly within the family?                                   | Historical family context            |
| Sons feel their friends do not talk openly with their parents either. Mother feels other parents are more open when discussing sexual matters with their children. Feels her sons talk about sexual matters with her friend because she is a lot more open and feels/shows less embarrassment. | Daughter feels boys and girls talk openly with the same sex parent. Mother feels other families that she knows are quite open when discussing SRE matters, but discuss it as and when needed or necessary.  | Parental communication and SRE with their children | Is it not that more families are discussing sexual matters more because sex is becoming the norm as society changes? | Societal changes and SRE as the norm |
| Sons feel equal sex education is given to both boys and girls. Mother is unsure as to what sex education is given to boys and girls.   | Daughter feels equal sex education is given to both boys and girls. Mother things both boys and girls are given the same-sex education as one another.  | Parental communication and SRE with their children | Does not teaching boys the same as girls not increase curiosity?   | Formal SRE                           |
| Are not sure when parents want them to know about sexual matters. Mother wants her sons to learn about sexual matters at a time that is right for them.  | Daughter feels her parents would want her to know about sexual matters at about 8 years old as when it was first discussed. Mother would want her daughter to know about sexual matters by about the age of 10 so she is prepared for puberty and the changes that are to                                 | Parental communication and SRE with their children | Is it not just that parents want better for their children than they had?  | Preliminary age of SRE conversations |

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|  | occur.  |  |  |                                       |
| Sons feel parents are not involved in the SRE they receive at school and prefer it this way. Mother does not want to be involved with the SRE her sons' receive than she already is.                             | Daughter feels that in secondary school parents are not involved in the SRE she receives. Mother does not feel she is involved or gets told the SRE her daughter receives.  | Parental communication and SRE with their children | What are the benefits of parents being informed of the SRE that is taught to their children?                                     | Formal SRE and schools inform parents |
| Sons do not want parents to be involved in the SRE they receive at school. Mother would like to know more about what is taught and when it is to occur.  | Daughter wants parents to be involved in the SRE she receives at school by them knowing more about what is taught. Mother would like to know more about what is being taught and when so parents are prepared for any SRE conversations that are to arise and are then prepared with the answers they would give. | Parental communication and SRE with their children | Parents do not necessarily want to become involved in the SRE taught at school but just be told when, and what topics are taught | Formal SRE and schools inform parents |
| Sons use magazines, movies and television to learn about SRE matters. Mother feels her sons use every form of the media to learn about SRE topics.   | At school the daughter uses videos and DVDs to learn about sexual matters. Mother feels her daughter use TV and teenage magazines to learn about SRE matters.   | Media impact on SRE within the family              | How much do children learn from these sources?   | Contribution of media sources         |
| Learns about how to have sex and how to behave in certain situations. Mother thinks they learn more about sex the act, contraception and anything else they want to know about from the different media sources. | Learns about contraception and what people experience when having sex. Mother feels that the media teaches young people so much about SRE matters however, is concerned about the messages and the acceptance that it is okay just to have sex as and when and not as part of a loving caring relationship.       | Media impact on SRE within the family              | Do children learn about SRE topics through looking at pornographic material?   | Contribution of media sources         |
| Prefers to use these sources alongside having the facts. Mother thinks her sons prefer to use media sources to find out more about sexual matters.   | Prefers to use these sources alongside having the facts. Mother thinks her daughter may prefer to use the media to learn about the different topics associated with SRE.  | Media impact on SRE within the family              | What information/ material are they learning from the media?   | Media influences                      |
| Thinks the media has quite a big impact over what they learn. Mother thinks the media has a big impact over what they learn.   | Does not know the impact the media has over the SRE she learns. Mother thinks the media have a large impact on the SRE young people learn about because it is everywhere and therefore no escaping  | Media impact on SRE within the family              | Do children learn from media sources because they don't get told   | Media influences                      |

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|   | from it.  |   | about sexual matters elsewhere?   |  |
| Thinks the media can act as a deterrent. Mother thinks the media can act as a deterrent, but not always.  | Thinks the media can act as a deterrent. Mother thinks that the media can act as a deterrent, but they also glamorise the negative consequences of sex.   | Media impact on SRE within the family   | How does the media influence children and their behaviour?                            | Positive/negative effects of the media             |
| Thinks the media is a good thing in the SRE they learn. Mother thinks the media can be a good thing, but has reservations on the amount of programmes that have sexual content.   | Thinks the media is a good thing in the SRE she learns. Mother thinks the media can be a good thing in that it generates SRE conversations, but thinks it also puts a lot of pressure on young people to behave in a certain way.   | Media impact on SRE within the family   | Why do parents disagree with the messages from the media?                             | Media influences and contribution of media sources |
| Does not know of religious beliefs influences the SRE that young people receive. Mother feels that parent's religion does not influence what their children learn regarding SRE and thinks young people are far less religious and therefore will find out the information so they can live their own life. | Does not think religious beliefs influences the SRE that young people receive. Mother thinks that the religious views of parents can influence the SRE their children learn, but feels it is wrong because young people need to have the information in this day and age. | Impact of religion on discussing SRE within the family  | Is religion not as important to young people as it was for their parents? Is so, why? | Unimportance of religion                           |
| <b>Impact of the Sense CD</b>   |   |   |   |  |
| Both sons thought the questions could have been worded better so there is one true answer. Mother thought the CD was okay, but had reservations as to how representative the scenarios are of young people and their parents when discussing sexual matters.  | Daughter thought CD was okay. Mother thought that the CD was good in that it provided information that young people need.   | Although children thought that the multimedia program was okay there were some reservations based on the questions/ responses of the questions asked. Furthermore, parents questioned the positive content on how parents/ children were conveyed when discussing sexual matters. This mainly being because it is different to theirs as they do not discuss sexual matters openly within the family. |   |  |
| Liked the colouring and the fact that it was quite modern. Mother thought the range of subjects that are covered in the CD are good.  | Daughter thought the CD was quite modern. Mother withheld judgement until watching more of the CD.  | There was a general consensus that the multimedia program was modern and covered a wide-range of topics that were useful to young people.   |   |  |
| Found the fly and the noise annoying when getting an answer correct in the 'True and False' section.  | Daughter had no view on the CD regarding what she liked the least. Mother withheld judgement until watching more of the CD.   | As in other families mothers found the noises to be annoying as it prevented them from concentrating on the facts that were given.  |   |  |

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| Son 2 thought the CD would be good for young people of 13 years, whereas son 1 thought it would also be good for older people, especially girls. Mother thought the CD would be good for 12 year olds and onwards.  | Daughter thought CD would be good for young people aged about 10. Mother thought the CD would be good for about 14 year olds.  | There were mixed views on the appropriate age for using the multimedia program. However, children reported the CD-ROM as being a useful resource from a younger age than parents did.   |
| Both sons would feel uncomfortable watching all aspects of the CD as a family, especially with their mother. Mother thinks her sons would get embarrassed watching sections of the CD as a family.  | Would not feel uncomfortable watching the CD with her mum. Mother would not feel uncomfortable discussing any aspect of the CD with her daughter.  | It appears parents/ children of the opposite sex would feel uncomfortable watching the multimedia program together. This was supported in the grounded theory analysis previously.  |
| Would prefer to use CD rather than talk to parents about SRE matters. Mother feels her sons would just laugh at the sections in the CD if they were to watch it as a family.  | Would prefer to talk to her mum rather than use the CD to learn about SRE matters. Mother feels that it may be better for her daughter to watch the CD and then ask any questions that she has concerns with.                                  | It was agreed that family 11 would not use the multimedia program to increase sexual communications within the family. However, because mother/ daughter had discussed many of the aspects on the multimedia program the daughter would benefit from watching it alone and then ask her mother about things she was still unsure about. |
| Both sons' thought the CD would be good in generating conversations in other families, just not theirs. Mother agrees with her sons in that it is dependent upon each family's communications when discussing SRE matters.  | Daughter not sure if the CD would be useful in generating conversations within the family. Mother thinks that the CD would be useful when discussing sexual matters, but this was based on how certain families choose to discuss SRE matters. | It was agreed that the multimedia program would be useful in facilitating SRE conversations among families however; this was dependant upon parents and their children's willingness to discuss sexual matters openly.  |
| Both sons feel the CD would not be useful in improving SRE communications within their family. Mother feels the CD would not be useful in improving SRE communications within their family because she and her sons get embarrassed when discussing sexual matters. | Daughter not sure if the CD would be useful in improving SRE communications within her family. Mother withheld judgement until watching more of the CD.  | It was found that in families where previous embarrassment had occurred when discussing sexual matters that the multimedia program would not be useful. However, it was reported that the CD-Rom would be useful in increasing SRE conversations in families where mother/ daughter were not embarrassed.                               |
| Son 1 liked all aspects of the CD especially the virtual clinic because it provided factual information and advice. Son 2 did   | Daughter had no view on the CD regarding what she liked the least. Mother thought it was difficult to get a grasp of how to get from one section to  | It was found that parents and their children disliked minor points associated with noise, functioning and frustration associated with the multimedia program when answering questions in the <i>'True and False'</i> section.   |

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| not like the fact that if you got a question wrong it would not tell you the right answer explaining the answer. Mother found the 'True and False' section to be the section she liked the least because of the silly noise it that was made when making your selection (e.g. Bbbbbbzzing). | another, without watching the scenario in full before you could look at another section.   |   |
| MOTHER and SONS all agreed that the CD would be useful for young people of the age of 12 years and upwards.   | Daughter thought CD would be good for young people aged about 10. Mother thought the CD was good for young people aged about 14 for some of the sections, especially the relationship section and information on abortion and contraception. | Children (especially daughters) perceive the multimedia program to be useful for young people than that thought of parents.   |
| MOTHER and SONS all agreed that there were many if not all aspects of the CD they have not discussed as a family.   | Would not feel uncomfortable watching the CD with her mum. Mother would not feel uncomfortable watching the CD with her daughter.  | It was found that parents and their children would not feel uncomfortable using the multimedia program if they were not embarrassed when discussing sexual matters. |
| Both sons would prefer to use CD rather than talk to their parents about SRE matters.   | Daughter not sure if there were aspects on the CD that she has not discussed with her family.<br>Mother has not discussed all aspects of the CD with her daughter, but will do when she gets older.  | Parents had not discussed all aspects of the multimedia program with their children due to embarrassment and young age of daughter.                                 |
| Both sons think the CD would be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family; just not in theirs.  | Would prefer to talk to her mum rather than use the CD to learn about SRE matters. Mother would prefer for her daughter to talk to her if she had any questions that came from watching the CD alone.  | There was a general consensus that the multimedia program would be useful for families when discussing sexual matters.  |
| Mother feels the CD would be able to discuss aspects of the CD with her sons', but she knows they wouldn't talk to her.   | Daughter not sure if the CD would be useful in generating conversations within the family.<br>Mother does not think after watching the CD that it would improve communications within the family.  | The multimedia program was reported to not being useful in families who were embarrassed and in those where sexual matters were already openly discussed.           |



### **To investigate the following based on interviews 11 and 12**

- How SRE was taught to parents – e.g. which parent did they talk to about sexual matters and why?
- Was SRE taught to parents accurate? Did parents learn from listening to other peoples conversations? What age did parents have the SRE knowledge needed? How could it have been improved?
- How SRE was taught to child - e.g. at school and at home? Is it embarrassing to discuss sexual matters? Why?
- Parental communication – e.g. more SRE given to different genders? Why?
- Level of SRE taught by parents
- Age SRE is taught by parents – e.g. restrictions of discussing sexual matters openly within the family? Overcome, how?
- Initiation of SRE – e.g. when are SRE conversations likely to occur?
- Do parents feel they have the most up-to-date SRE to teach their children about sexual matters?
- Parent observation and teaching SRE at the right time
- Parental attitudes and impact on child – e.g. gays
- Impact of religion on parents and furthermore their children
- Media impact on child's SRE education
- Impact of the Sense CD on reducing barriers for families to discuss SRE.

### **Main categories from the generated themes after 12 interview sessions**

- ❖ **SRE taught to adolescents**
- ❖ **SRE taught to parents**
- ❖ **Parental communication of SRE with their children**
- ❖ **Media impact on SRE within the family**
- ❖ **Impact of the multimedia program on reducing barriers for discussing SRE within the family**
- ❖ **Effects of religion on discussing SRE in the family context**

| <b>Family # 13<br/>Mother (44), Father (38) and Son (13)</b>   | <b>Family # 14<br/>Mother (34), Father (34) and Son (14)</b>  | <b>Open Coding</b>        | <b>Axial Coding</b>   | <b>Selective Coding</b>  |
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| Son taught SRE in year 6 (10-11 years) from form teacher and was told about sex and things to do with puberty. In year 8-9 (12 to 13) have been told more about what sex is and different things to do with puberty. In year 9 – Outside visitors delivered the sex education roadshow covering puberty, contraception, STIs and relationships. Mother has a rough idea of the sex education that was taught to their son at primary school but is not sure what he has been taught at secondary school. Parents also do not know when their son receives sex education. | From about the age of 12 the son has been told the basics from school, mainly about puberty, what sex is, contraception and STIs. Both parents do not know exactly what sex education has been taught at school, but do know that he knows everything to do with sex, but probably just not the experience of it. | SRE taught to adolescents | Why do schools teach SRE differently?<br>What do children prefer?   | SRE provided at school   |
| SRE taught in mixed classes and son has no preference for single or mixed sex classes. Parents do not know if the SRE is taught in single or mixed sex classes.  | Sex education was taught in a mixed class of about 30 pupils, but does not mind mixed classes as sex education affects both boys and girls. Parents are not aware of whether sex is taught in single or mixed sex classes, but mother assumes that it is single sex.  | SRE taught to adolescents | Does having mixed classes not only prevent curiosity about the opposite sex, but also teach children of the important things that are going to happen; making children aware of each genders experiences? | Formal SRE and Sexual experiences/ awareness of the opposite sex |
| Gave signposting of where to go for further information or advice by outside visitors from the roadshow. Parents do not know if any sign posting was given to their son.   | Gave signposting of where to go for further information or advice via leaflets, websites and a booklet. Father does not know if any sign posting was given to his son, but  | SRE taught to adolescents | What further signposting do young people want?  | SRE provided at school   |

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|  | mother thinks he may have because she has seen a leaflet in her son's bedroom.  |                           |   |   |
| Friends have taught the son the most about SRE matters. Parents feel that the school has taught their son the most about SRE, and possibly their peers.  | Mum, dad and school have taught son the most about SRE matters. Mother feels that she has given more advice about sexual matters to her son, but her and her husband agree that he has taught their son the most about SRE.   | SRE taught to adolescents | What aspects of SRE do children discuss and what do they want to know more about?   | SRE and friends   |
| Prefer to talk to friends about SRE matters and can't remember asking his parents about SRE matters. If he was to talk to a particular parent it would be his mum because he feels closer to her. Parents do not think he prefers for any particular person to teach their son about sex, but feel he would just ask if he wanted to know something, even ask his grandma. | Prefers mum, dad and school to teach SRE matters. Father thinks that his son prefers to talk to him and his wife about sexual matters because they are a close family and that the son can trust them as parents.   | SRE taught to adolescents | Having close, trusting relationship with parents allows for sexual matters to be discussed more, especially from young people perspective | Positive relations with mother and influence of joint parents                       |
| Both the son and his parents feel their son and them have both initiated the SRE conversations.  | Both the son and his parents have initiated conversations on sexual matters.  | SRE taught to adolescents | Does the willingness for both parents and their children increase sexual communications?  | Positive relations with mother and influence of joint parents                       |
| Son does not get embarrassed when discussing sexual matters with his parents. Parents do not find it embarrassing to talk about sex with their son.  | Son does not get embarrassed discussing sexual matters with his parents (mainly the father). Father does not get embarrassed talking to his son about sexual matters, but the mother sometimes feels embarrassed talking about things (e.g. masturbation) just because that was the way it was for her. Both parents feel their son gets embarrassed talking to them about the relationships he has with girls. | SRE taught to adolescents | Children do not get embarrassed talking to their parents when they do not get embarrassed.  | Positive communications; gender specific SRE conversations and gendered experiences |
| Started to learn about sexual matters from about 11 years old. Parents agree that it would be about  | Started thinks he was taught some SRE in primary school and when he was about 10 or 11 years old. Parents   | SRE taught to adolescents | Does learning about sexual matters from a   | Preliminary age of SRE conversations  |

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| the last year of primary school that their son started to learn about sexual matters.  | recall talking to their son about sexual matters seriously from the age of 9 or 10, but also touched on it previously in a less serious way.   |                           | young age lead to the topic to become the norm and therefore less embarrassing?   |   |
| Son did not feel he was left needing to know more about the things he had been told. Parents feel their son was not left needing to know more about sexual matters. If he did he would just ask or go on the Internet to find out more.  | Son did not feel he was left needing to know more about the things he had been told. Parents do not feel that their son is left wondering about things because if he was unsure or wanted to know more they know he would ask them.                                      | SRE taught to adolescents | Is it that children who are taught about sexual matters from a young age feel more comfortable talking to their parents in their teens where there are no subjects that they could not ask about?                   | Positive communications                     |
| Would prefer to be taught about sexual matters from people at the roadshow because you do not get embarrassed talking to them about things openly and it is less embarrassing because you know you are not going to see them again. Also because they just give the facts and do not probe further. Parents would prefer for their son to learn about sex from the school and then they just top up his knowledge. | Would prefer to be taught about sexual matters from teachers because they know more with it being their job. Parents would prefer to teach their son about sexual matters as they can see how he is developing and know the sorts of things he would want to know about. | SRE taught to adolescents | If children do not perceive their parents to have the up-to-date SRE knowledge they show a preference to be taught by teachers? However, how much do the teachers know and do they get embarrassed like parents do? | Respect/ consideration of children's wishes |
| Feels he picks up some information from other people's conversations.  | Feels he learns things when hearing details from other people's conversations.   | SRE taught to adolescents | Was this not the same from parents? What information do they learn about from listening to other people   | Historical family context                   |

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|  |  |                           | conversations?   |   |
| Son does not feel him and his friends discuss sex education matters, but they discuss sex and what it is all about, but they have more of a laugh about things and talk about how they are changing. Parents feel that their son will discuss sexual matters with his friends, but mainly have a laugh about things. | Son does discuss sexual matters with his friends, mainly their experiences. Discussed things with his friends because friends can trust each other. Parents feel their son talks to his friends about sexual matters because he has told them some of the jokes that they have told him and the slang terms that they use. | SRE taught to adolescents | Do young people talk to their friends to learn about how to behave and not to become the out group?                                  | SRE and friends   |
| Mainly learn about what friends are going through with us all being about the same age. Parents feel that their son will discuss things with his friends that he would not discuss with them; mainly about their experiences and what they are going through at their particular ages.                               | Mainly learn what it is like for other people when discussing sexual matters. Parents not sure of the sexual matters that their son would discuss with his friends, but feel the conversations will be concerned with what teenagers should do and how they should behave.   | SRE taught to adolescents | Does knowing that friends are experiencing the same things make young people more comfortable with the changes that occur?           | SRE and friends   |
| Mother can't remember being given any sex education, but the father can only remember being told about sex and what it was in biology class.   | Parents were given their SRE via assembly where all the year just laughed. The raw information on what sex was taught/ told.   | SRE taught to parents     | How are parents suppose to have the schema to teach their own children?  | Quality of SRE delivered and lack of parental knowledge |
| Neither of the mothers or fathers parents taught them about sexual matters. Mother mainly learnt things from her older sister and father learnt from friends and magazines.  | The mother parents did not talk about sex at all, but the father's parents were very open about sex from about the time when he was ten.   | SRE taught to parents     | Was this associated with lack of parent's, parents and/ or religious beliefs?  | Effects of religion                                     |
| The father's parents didn't mention the sex education they had had, but the mother's mother has commented that she never had sex education when she was younger.   | The mothers parents did not comment on the SRE they received, but the fathers parents told him how bad their sex education was and how the mother was not prepared for her periods because she hadn't been educated on sexual matters and puberty.   | SRE taught to parents     | Was sex not discussed in the olden days because parent's parents did not get taught sexual matters themselves and/ or embarrassment? | Historical family context                               |

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| The mother feels that her parents did not have the knowledge to teach her SRE, but the father thinks his parents had the knowledge but just never talked about it. | Both parents felt their own parents had the SRE knowledge to teach them about sexual matters.  | SRE taught to parents | Why did some parents parent's discuss sexual matters and some did not?  | Historical family context                               |
| Both parents felt that their family did not talk openly about sexual matters due to embarrassment.   | The mother's family did not talk openly about sexual matters due to embarrassment, but the father's parents were not embarrassed and talked about sex very openly within the family and nothing was left uncovered.  | SRE taught to parents | A factor which prevented SRE conversations in the olden days was embarrassment of parents – any change?                   | Embarrassment associated with discussing sexual matters |
| Mother learnt the most SRE from her sister and friends. Father learnt the basics from school, but then the most from his friends.                                  | The mother learnt most about sexual matters from her friends, but the father learnt about SRE matters from both his parents, however mainly his father.  | SRE taught to parents | What aspects of SRE did parents learn from their friends?   | SRE and friends   |
| Looking back the mother felt she did not need to know more, but with the father only being given the basics in biology he wanted to learn more from his friends.   | Looking back the mother felt she did not know enough SRE and was often left wondering as some of the information was often untrue, whereas the father never felt he did not know about all aspects of SRE from a young age from his parents.   | SRE taught to parents | If parents did not know SRE facts from parents and friends they would rely on magazines to learn more.                    | SRE and friends and contribution of media sources       |
| Learnt about SRE matters from friends and other people's conversations.  | Both parents learnt about SRE matters from listening to other people's conversations.  | SRE taught to parents | Do we all not learn about things this way?  | SRE as the norm   |
| Both parents felt that they had adequate SRE knowledge when they were about 15 years old.  | Both parents felt they knew all aspects of SRE when they were 18 and had chance to put into context what they had been told by experimenting.  | SRE taught to parents | Did parents learn from experiences because they were not told the SRE facts?  | Sexual experiences/ awareness of the opposite sex       |
| Sex education could have been improved just by it actually existing and by not providing just the basics. There needed to be greater emphasis on SRE.              | The father felt that the SRE taught to him could have been improved by showing how to use condoms and not assume that everybody knows how to have sex, whereas the mother felt the SRE she received could have been improved if it was taught in groups where people can ask questions | SRE taught to parents | Why are children not asked how they prefer to be taught SRE and furthermore what information they still want to know more | Quality of SRE given                                    |

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|  | without getting embarrassed.  |  | about?  |  |
| Parents would have preferred for sexual matters to have been discussed more openly when they were younger.   | The mother wishes that sexual matters had been discussed more openly within the family when she was younger.  | SRE taught to parents                            | How could this have been improved?  | Historical family context  |
| Both parents felt that they had the up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach her son about sexual matters.  | Mother feels she does not have the most up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach her son but the father feels he has and if he didn't know something he would know where to go to get the information to tell his son.   | SRE taught to parents                            | Do the effects of joint parents increase the likelihood of sexual matters being discussed openly?                               | Lack of parental knowledge and influence of joint parents        |
| Son feels that if he was to talk to either parent it would be his mother because he feels closer to her and she is around more and does not work, but does talk to his father about things as well when he is at home. Mother feels that her son talks to his father more about sexual matters but would come to her if he wanted to know something because he is not shy. | Son mainly talks to his dad about sexual matters because he feels that he has a greater idea than his mum about what he is going through with being the same sex. Father mainly talks to their son about sexual matters when they are out cycling together. | Parental communication & SRE with their children |   | Gendered experiences and positive communications                 |
| Son asks questions and the mother answers. Parents feel that they and their son have initiated conversations about sexual matters.   | Father and son have both initiated the conversations regarding SRE matters. Father and son have both initiated the conversations regarding SRE matters.   | Parental communication & SRE with their children | If sexual matters are discussed from a young age does this allow both parents and their children initiate sexual conversations? | Preliminary age of SRE conversations and positive communications |
| Conversations concerning sexual matters with his mother normally occur when coming in from school and the conversations with his father are likely to occur whenever they are together.  | Son discusses sexual matters with his father when they are out cycling together. Father discusses sexual matters with his son when they are out cycling together, but also when they watch television together or when the family have meals together.      | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Increased conversations appear to exist when parents and their children spend time together                                     | Influence of joint parents                                       |
| Son couldn't think of anything that he would not discuss with his  | Son discusses all aspects of sexual matters with his father. The father and   | Parental communication &                         | With fathers being the main   | Positive communications  |

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| parents. Parents do not feel that there is anything they wouldn't discuss with their son.   | son spend a lot of time together so it allows them to talk pretty much about anything and everything.   | SRE with their children                          | family earners is less time spent with their children?   | and absent father                                      |
| Does not get embarrassed when discussing sexual matters with his parents. Parents agree that they do not get embarrassed when discussing sexual matters with their son.   | Father and son do not get embarrassed when discussing any sexual matters. Mother agrees that she may get embarrassed discussing some aspects of SRE that concern males, but will talk about anything with her son even if it is embarrassing.   | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Is the lack of embarrassment due to the positive communications within the family for discussing sexual matters?                   | Positive communications and influence of joint parents |
| Both parents feel their son does not get embarrassed discussing sexual matters. However, they do not ask him questions where he would get embarrassed, instead just give the facts and then let him steer the sexual conversations with his parents.  | Both parents feel their son gets embarrassed talking to them about the relationships that he has with girls. However, they do not ask him anything personal and he offers the information he is comfortable with.   | Parental communication & SRE with their children | By not asking children personal questions does this increase the likelihood that they will ask more at a time when they are ready? | Respect/ consideration of children's wishes.           |
| Son thinks his friends would teach him most about sexual matters if his parents didn't talk to him. Mother things her son will learn from school if they didn't teach him about sexual matters.   | Son thinks the school and friends would teach him about SRE if his mother and father didn't. Parents think that their son's friends and school would teach their son the most about SRE matters if they didn't talk about SRE topics with her son.  | Parental communication & SRE with their children | If parents do not talk to their children about SRE topics, what things will they not learn about from friends and at school?       | SRE provided at school and SRE and friends             |
| Son feels that his parents have the most up-to-date SRE knowledge because they have already been through what he is going through. Parents feel they have the knowledge to teach her son about sexual matters, but if they did not know something they would know where to go for the information | Son feels that his parents do not have the most up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach him about all SRE matters. Mother feels she does not necessarily have the knowledge to discuss aspects of SRE with her son, but the father feels he is quite knowledgeable in most aspects to give his son the correct information. | Parental communication & SRE with their children | If children perceive their parents to not have the most up-to-date SRE knowledge does this deter from SRE conversations occurring? | Lack of parental knowledge                             |



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| SRE Conversations are restricted when his younger brother and sister are present, but these restrictions are overcome by talking to parents when they are in bed. Parents feel that there are no restrictions on discussing SRE.                                      | No restrictions on discussing SRE matters.  | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Younger siblings appear to restrict SRE conversations occurring within the family                           | Human restrictions                                     |
| Son feels that his family do talk openly about sexual matters. Parents feel that their family talks openly about sexual matters.  | Son feels his family talk openly about sexual matters. Parents feel that their family is open when discussing sexual matters.   | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Parents/ children who perceive SRE to be the norm discuss sexual matters openly within the family           | SRE as the norm  |
| Son feels that his friends do not talk openly with their parents, like he does. Mother feels other talk openly when discussing sexual matters with their children.  | Son feels that other families discuss sexual matters in the same way as his. Parents feel their family is a lot more open when discussing sexual matters compared to other families.  | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Parents are more likely to discuss sexual matters with their own children if their parents did              | Historical family context                              |
| Son feels equal sex education is given to both boys and girls. Mother feels more sex education is given to girls than boys.   | Son feels equal sex education is given to both boys and girls. Parents wouldn't know because they don't have a daughter and are not aware of what SRE is given.   | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Why should it be this way?  | Formal SRE   |
| Mother wants her sons to be learning about sexual matters before going into secondary school (aged 10-11) because that is when his friends would be talking about it, but the father thinks his son needs to know about sexual matters when he is about 12 years old. | Son feels his parents would want him to know about sexual matters at about 10 years old just as that is the age when it was first discussed. Parents would want their son to know about sexual matters seriously from 10 years old, but lead up to that time by giving other information earlier when he is able to understand. | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Are these wishes of parents based on how they were taught and by wanting better SRE for their own children? | Quality of SRE delivered and historical family context |
| Son feels his parents are not involved in the SRE they receive at secondary school. Mother does not feel that the school involves parents enough with regards to the sex education her son receives.  | Son feels his parents are not involved in the SRE that is delivered at school. Parents feel they are not involved in the SRE that is given to their son at secondary school.  | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Are schools not already supposed to be informing parents of what SRE they teach their children?             | Schools to inform parents                              |
| Son would like parents to be more   | Son would not mind if his parents had   | Parental   | How schools can   | Wishes of  |

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| involved in the sex education that is provided at school because this may allow them to talk more about sexual matters with their children. Parents would like to know more about what is taught and when it is to occur because this would prepare them for questions that may be asked and so they can raise things with their son. | more involvement in the SRE that he receives at school. Parents would prefer to be told what is being taught and when it is being taught so they can be prepared for any questions that may arise.  | communication & SRE with their children | help in increasing sexual matters being discussed more openly within the family                            | parents and their children             |
| Son uses movies and television to learn about SRE matters. Parents feels their sons use the Internet to learn about SRE matters.  | Son uses television to learn about SRE matters. Parents feel their son uses TV to learn about SRE matters.  | Media impact on SRE within the family   | Is there a gendered preference for media sources?  | Media influences                       |
| Learns about words and what they mean. Parents feel their son uses the Internet to search and find out more about things that he has heard or wants to know more about.   | Learns about what it is like for other people. Parents feel that their son will learn about mainly different types of relationships that are shown in the soaps and on programmes aimed at the younger population.  | Media impact on SRE within the family   | Are children learning sexual matters from the media that they do not get taught about at school?           | Contribution of media sources          |
| Prefers to use these sources to learn about sexual matters. Parents think their son prefers to talk to people about sexual matters, but then use the Internet to be totally sure he understands what he has been told, because he is inquisitive like that.   | Prefers to different sources to learn about SRE matters including parents, school, friends and television. Parents think that their son prefers to watch television to learn about things rather than reading just so he can also see for himself what the norm is. | Media impact on SRE within the family   | Do they learn about what they don't want for themselves based on what is shown in the media?               | Contribution of media sources          |
| Thinks the media has quite a big impact over what he learns. Parents think the media has a big impact over what their son learns.   | Thinks that the impact the media has a big impact over the SRE he learns. Father thinks the media has a massive impact over the SRE that his son learns because sexual matters are discussed a lot more openly.   | Media impact on SRE within the family   | Do the media provide the information children want to learn from? If so, why do children use the Internet? | SRE as the norm                        |
| Thinks the media can act as a deterrent because it shows the consequences of sexual behaviour. Father thinks that the media makes people think and the mother agrees because of how it can happen in real life and therefore it can act as a  | Thinks the media can act as a deterrent. Parents think that the media can sometimes act as a deterrent, but think it can go over the top with different sexual relationships (e.g. gay, lesbian and casual sex) without showing the negative consequences of        | Media impact on SRE within the family   | Do parents view the media to be negative as it does not follow the values and morals within their family?  | Positive/negative effects of the media |

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| deterrent because it is showing the consequences of sexual behaviour.  | sex.  |  | What do children think?  |  |
| Thinks the media is a good thing because it lets you learn quicker. Parents think the media can be a good thing because it generates conversations about things that may not have been talked about without the media bringing topics to the surface for discussion. | Thinks the media is a good thing because it teaches people about the things they need to know about. Mother thinks the media can be a good thing in that it covers topical issues and everything associated with sex. | Media impact on SRE within the family  | Media generates sexual conversations within the family both from a parent/ child perspective | Media influences, positive/ negative effects of the media, Contribution of media sources and SRE as the norm |
| Does not feel that religion influences the SRE that he receives. Parents do not think religion influences the SRE that they give to their son.   | Does not think religion influences the SRE that he receives. Parents do not think religion influences the SRE that they give to their son.  | Impact of religion on discussing SRE within the family   | Religion does not have an effect in non-faith families                                       | Effects of religion  |
| <b>Impact of the multimedia program on reducing barriers for discussing SRE in the family</b>  |   |  |  |  |
| Son thought the CD, especially the quiz was good because it taught him things. Both parents thought the CD was good.   | Son thought the CD was okay. Parents thought the CD was good and the mother wished that it had been around when she was younger.  | The multimedia program was liked by all family members, but it was less useful for children who have been taught about sexual matters from their parents from a young age.   |  |  |
| Son liked the quiz and thought the fly was funny. Parents thought the CD was good.   | Son thought the graphics were good. Parents thought the CD was bright and very modern.  | The 'True and False' section seemed to appeal to the young son when learning about sexual matters. It was also reported that the multimedia program was bright and modern, which will appeal to young people.                                      |  |  |
| Son thought the CD would be good for young people of 13 years. Father thought that certain aspects of the CD would be good for primary school children as well.  | Son thought CD would be good for young people aged about 11 or 12. Parents thought the CD would be good for about 10/11 year olds.  | As with other parents it was felt that the multimedia program could be useful for less than the recommended age of 11. This mainly as some of the topics covered should be already taught as part of the curriculum earlier than secondary school. |  |  |
| Parents and their child reported that there were no aspects of the multimedia program they would feel uncomfortable watching as a family.  | Parents and their child reported that there were no aspects of the multimedia program they would feel uncomfortable watching as a family.   |  |  |  |
| Parents and their son do not think there were issues on the CD that they have not discussed as a family.   | Parents and their son do not think there were issues on the CD that they have not discussed as a family.  | Due to discussing sexual matters openly within the family it was found that there were no topics on the multimedia that the families had not discussed.  |  |  |
| Would prefer to use CD and talk to parents to learn about SRE matters.   | Would prefer to talk to his parents, mainly dad rather than use the CD to learn about SRE matters.  | Both sons prefer to talk to their parents (mainly fathers) about sexual matters, but the youngest son would also use the multimedia program to learn facts, which feed these conversations.  |  |  |

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| Son thought the CD would be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family. Parents thought the CD would be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family.  | CD would be useful when discussing sexual matters, but not in their family because they have already talked openly about all SRE topics with their 14 year old son.  | Both families thought the multimedia program would benefit families when discussing sexual matters, especially in family 13 where the son is still young and probably still has a lot to learn.   |
| Son feels he will talk to his parents more when watching the CD, but then just ask questions as before. Parents feel they will talk more when watching the CD as a family.   | Son feels that the CD would not be useful in improving SRE communications within his family because they already talk openly. Parents feel that the CD would not be useful in improving SRE communications within their family because they have already discussed all aspects on the CD when their son was far younger. | It would appear that in families where sexual matters have been discussed in families from a young age, and for some time that most of the topics on the multimedia program have been discussed. However, both families felt the multimedia program could be beneficial in improving sexual communications within families. |
| Son thought the CD was good because it gave lots of information. Mother thought the CD was colourful and both parents thought the CD was good.   | Son thought the CD was okay, but too young for him. Parents thought the CD was good in that it was colourful and the graphics were good.   | Family members thought that the multimedia program was good as it was modern, colourful and provided good graphics.   |
| Son liked the fly and the scenarios, especially those with real people acting. Father thought the CD was informative and gave some good advice.  | Son thought the real characters made CD better. Mother thought the virtual clinic section was good and the father liked the body parts section because it was explained simply.  | There was much support for using real characters for the different scenarios when giving advice, especially at the virtual clinic.  |
| Son liked all aspects of the CD. Both parents found the fly to be annoying even though their son like the fly.   | Son had no view on the CD regarding what he liked the least, but thought it was a bit babyish. Parents liked all aspects of the CD.  | It would appear based on these, and other interviews that have taken place parents find the 'fly' to be an annoying aspect.   |
| Son thought the CD was good for his age. Both parents thought that the body parts section would be good for primary school age, but the mother remarked that all aspects of the CD need to be know by about the age of 12 or 13 years. | Son thought the CD would be good for young people aged about 10 or 11. Parents thought the CD was good for young people from about the age of 9.   | There was support that the multimedia program should be used at a younger age than recommended, especially as young people need to know the various aspects on the multimedia program before they reach puberty.  |
| There were no aspects that the family would feel uncomfortable watching together.  | There were no aspects that the family would feel uncomfortable watching together.  | It was understandable that family members would not feel uncomfortable watching the multimedia program together as they already talked openly about sexual matters within the family.   |
| Son felt that as a family they have  | No aspects of the CD that they have  | It would appear that families have discussed sexual matters openly  |

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| not discussed STIs in great detail, but that was okay because he learnt that from school. Both parents thought they had talked about all topics in the CD but just not in the detail as school has.   | not discussed within the family.  | within the family. However, is it that parents will only be able to discuss sexual matters from their perspective based on their individual knowledge, rather than giving the facts that maybe school provide (e.g. STIs).  |
| Son thought the CD would be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family. Father thought the CD would be good in generating conversations.   | Would prefer to talk to his parents rather than use the CD to learn about SRE matters. Parents thought the CD would be good in generating conversations within families who do not have a close relationship.                           | It was reported that the multimedia program would be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family. Furthermore, that the multimedia program would be useful in generating sexual conversations in families when parents and their children share a close relationship. |
| Son felt the CD had been good but would ask questions to his parents as before if he needed to know something. Parents felt the CD would be helpful for other families when discussing SRE matters, but not necessarily theirs. The CD did not impact upon their family communications. | The CD has had no impact on how they discuss SRE matters because they are already open when discussing SRE matters. The CD has had no impact on how they discuss SRE matters because they are already open when discussing SRE matters. | Although the multimedia program did not impact upon how the families discussed sexual matters, the resource was regarded as a favourable one for other parents and their children when discussing sexual matters openly within the family.  |

### **To investigate the following based on interviews 13 and 14**

- How SRE was taught to parents – e.g. which parent did they talk to about sexual matters and why? Sexual matters not discussed as openly when they were younger – Why?
- Was SRE taught to parents accurate? Did parents learn from listening to other peoples conversations? What age did parents have the SRE knowledge needed? How could it have been improved? Level of SRE taught by parents
- How SRE was taught to child - e.g. at school and at home? Is it embarrassing to discuss sexual matters? Why? Discussions with friends vs. parents? Why do parents discuss sexual matters more openly with them compared to how they were taught?
- Parental communication – e.g. more SRE given to different genders? Why?
- Age SRE is taught by parents – e.g. restrictions of discussing sexual matters openly within the family? Overcome, how?
- Initiation of SRE – e.g. when are SRE conversations likely to occur?
- Do parents feel they have the most up-to-date SRE to teach their children about sexual matters?

- Parent observation and teaching SRE at the right time
- Parental attitudes and impact on child – e.g. gays
- Impact of religion on parents and furthermore their children
- Media impact on child's SRE education
- Impact of the Sense CD on reducing barriers for families to discuss SRE

### **Main categories from the generated themes after 14 interview sessions**

- ❖ **SRE taught to adolescents**
- ❖ **SRE taught to parents**
- ❖ **Parental communication of SRE with their children**
- ❖ **Media impact on SRE within the family**
- ❖ **Impact of the multimedia program on reducing barriers for discussing SRE within the family**
- ❖ **Effects of religion on discussing SRE in the family context**

| <b>Family # 15<br/>Mother (44), sons 1 (14) and<br/>2 (15)</b>  | <b>Family # 16<br/>Mother (35) and daughter (15)</b>   | <b>Open Coding</b>        | <b>Axial Coding</b>  | <b>Selective Coding</b>   |
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| Both sons taught SRE in year 8-9 (12-13 years) from science teacher and were told about sex and things to do with puberty and hormones. Both sons also watched a video on SRE matters in year 8-9. Mother knows what SRE her sons have been taught because they talked to her about it. | Daughter taught about periods at the age of 11. Daughter taught about puberty, sex, contraception and STIs at the age of 11/12 but it was very poor and rushed. Mother does not know what sex education has been given to her daughter at school.  | SRE taught to adolescents | Further confirmation girls get taught SRE earlier than boys.   | SRE provided at school  |
| SRE taught in mixed classes and sons prefer this so you get an appreciation of what it is like for the opposite sex. Mother thinks that the SRE taught to her sons is in mixed sex classes.   | Sex education was taught in a mixed class of about 30 pupils, but does not mind mixed classes as sex education affects both boys and girls, but wishes more information had been given. Mother does not know whether sex was taught in single or mixed sex classes, but mother guesses that it is mixed sex. | SRE taught to adolescents | Children prefer mixed classes when being taught SRE so they find out what it is like for each gender.        | Formal SRE and sexual experiences/awareness of the opposite sex   |
| Gave signposting of where to go for further information or advice. Mother thinks that sign posting was given to her sons.   | Gave signposting of where to go for further information or advice via leaflets, websites and a booklet. Mother does not know if any signposting was given to his daughter.   | SRE taught to adolescents | Why is signposting given to some children and not others?  | SRE provided at school  |
| School has taught both sons the most about SRE matters. School have given some education, but their mother has also talked openly about sexual matters and knows her sons also learn from their friends, magazines and the Internet.  | Mum has taught daughter the most about SRE matters. Mother feels that she has taught her daughter the most about SRE matters.  | SRE taught to adolescents | Do mothers feel they have taught the most to their child when they are female, due to mother/ daughter bond? | Positive relations with mother, SRE provided at school, SRE and friends, absence of fathers, preliminary age of SRE conversations |
| Prefer to learn about SRE matters via school and talking to friends. Mother does not think they prefer any particular person to teach her sons about  | Daughter prefers her mum to teach her about SRE matters. Mother is not sure if her daughter prefers to talk to her about sexual matters but the mother has always encouraged conversations   | SRE taught to adolescents | Is SRE the norm if parents make it that way by being open with their children                                | Positive relations with mother, preliminary age of SRE conversations  |

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| sex, but feel they would just ask if he wanted to know something.   | and reinforced the things that her daughter needs to know about.   |                           | from a young age?  |  |
| Both the sons and mother agree that they have both initiated conversations regarding SRE matters.   | Daughter feels that both she and her mother have initiated conversations on sexual matters.  | SRE taught to adolescents | Does the willingness of both parents and children increase sexual communications?  | Positive relations with mother and SRE as the norm               |
| Sons do not get embarrassed when discussing sexual matters. Parents do not find it embarrassing to talk about sex with their son.   | Daughter used to get embarrassed discussing boys but does not get embarrassed discussing any other sexual matters with his mother. Mother does not get embarrassed discussing sexual matters with her daughter.  | SRE taught to adolescents | Is embarrassment caused when something is regarded as personal to the individual?  | Embarrassment associated with discussing sexual matters          |
| Started to learn about sexual matters from about 12 years old. Mother feels her sons started learning about body differences before going to primary school, but feels they would also have picked things up as they have got older through listening to conversations mother/ daughter have had with their older sister. | Started to learn about SRE topics seriously when she was about 11 years old but has been told about sexual matters from a young by her mother. Mother wanted her daughter to know about sexual matters in a serious way from about the age of 10, but to have the basic understanding from primary school age. | SRE taught to adolescents | Learning about sexual matters in general from a young age allows for more serious sexual conversations to occur at ease in later years.  | Preliminary age of SRE conversations and positive communications |
| Sons did not feel he was left needing to know more about the things they had been told. Mother feels that her sons were not left needing to know more about sexual matters. If they did they would just ask more until they did understand.   | Daughter did not feel she was left needing to know more about the things she had been told. Mother feels her daughter has the facts and knowledge of all SRE matters, but feels she is not at the stage of working out her feelings and emotions when having a sexual relationship.                            | SRE taught to adolescents | Is it that children who are taught about sexual matters from a young age feel more comfortable talking to their parents in their teens where there are no subjects that they could not talk about? | Positive communications  |
| Would prefer to be taught   | Daughter prefers to be taught about  | SRE taught to             | If the same-sex  | Positive   |



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| about sexual matters from friends, but also from their father because he would know what they are going through, but they don't see their father because he doesn't live in the family home. Mother would prefer to teach her sons about sexual matters.   | sexual matters from her mother because they are close and she knows she can trust her. Mother would prefer for her to teach her daughter about sexual matters, but welcomes anyone else to talk to her daughter to ensure she has all the facts and information her daughter needs. | adolescents               | parent is absent where do children learn about sexual matters from the perspective of their own gender?                        | communications, absence of fathers, parental responsibility |
| Feels they pick up some information from other people's conversations without realising it.  | Feels she learns things about boys from other people's conversations.   | SRE taught to adolescents | Is this not the same for all humans?   | Historical family context                                   |
| Sons do talk to their friends about SRE matters, but they tend to have more of a laugh about things rather than talking about it seriously. They talk to their friends because they trust each other and are the same age so they can relate to what each of them are going through. Mother knows that her sons discuss sexual matters with their friends because it is a top subject with them going through puberty and trying to make sense of what is happening to them. | Daughter does discuss sexual matters with his friends, mainly because they are from the same generation and know about what each of them are going through now. Mother feels that her daughter does talk to her friends about boys and relationships.                               | SRE taught to adolescents | Children talk to their friends because they can relate to each other with being from the same generation.                      | SRE and friends   |
| There are some SRE matters that they would discuss with their friends and not their mother. Mother feels that her sons will discuss things with their friends that they would not discuss with her, but feels they would ask her if they were unsure because of the openness within the family.  | There are no SRE matters that she would discuss with her friends and not her mother. Mother feels that her daughter will discuss things with her friends that she would not discuss with her, but thinks it will mainly be to do with boys and relationships with boys.             | SRE taught to adolescents | Is it that children talk to their friends so they can learn about each others experiences and then gain reassurance from this? | SRE and friends   |
| Mainly learn about what friends are going through with   | Mainly learn what it is like for other people when discussing sexual matters  | SRE taught to adolescents | Do young people talk to their  | SRE and friends   |

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| us all being about the same age and what it is like for girls. Mother feels that her sons will discuss things with their friends to look for the norm of how to behave and look for confirmation that how they behave fits in with the norm. | through gossiping. Mother thinks her daughter will discuss sexual matters with her friends to get confirmation that what she knows is true and correct. |                       | friends so they know how to behave and not become the out group?   |   |
| Mother given the basic sex education which covered reproduction and menstruation.  | Mother had two sessions which covered the basics, such as body parts, sex and menstruation.   | SRE taught to parents | How are parents suppose to be able to teach their own children about sexual matters when they were not taught it themselves? | Quality of SRE and lack of parental knowledge                                   |
| The mother's parents did not talk about sex at all, but feels her father would have talked to her about it if she had asked even though he would not regard it as his role, but instead her mothers.   | The mothers parents did not talk about sex at all, but the fathers parents were very open about sex from about the time when he was ten.                | SRE taught to parents | Was this associated with lack of parent's, parents and/ or religious beliefs?  | Effects of religion and historical family context                               |
| The mother's parents did not comment on the SRE they received.   | The mother's parents did not comment on the SRE they received.  | SRE taught to parents | What factors prohibited parent's, parents from discussing sexual matters?  | Historical family context   |
| The mother feels her parents did have the knowledge to teach her SRE, but chose not to because it was just not talked about at that time and her family were strict Catholics.   | The mother felt that her parents did not have the most up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach her about sexual matters.                                      | SRE taught to parents | Are there any other factors which prevented SRE topics being discussed with parents?   | Lack of parental knowledge and effects of religion                              |
| Mother feels that her family did not talk openly about sexual matters due to religious factors.  | The mother's family did not talk openly about sexual matters due to her father being a strong Catholic and the topic being embarrassing to discuss.     | SRE taught to parents | Further confirmation that the Catholic religion prevented SRE topics being   | Effects of religion and embarrassment associated with discussing sexual matters |

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|  |   |                       | discussed.  |  |
| Mother learnt most SRE from reading books and talking to friends.  | The mother learnt most about sexual matters from her first sexual partner at the age of 14.   | SRE taught to parents | Did parents learn through sexual experiences due to not being told sexual matters by their own parents and school?                | SRE and friends and Historical family context                                |
| Mother was taught about sexual matters at home but learnt through reading books and educating herself.   | The mother was not taught about sexual matters at home or in school, but by participating in a sexual relationship she learnt about sexual matters. | SRE taught to parents | If parents were given better SRE would this have prevented them from experimenting earlier in sexual relationships?               | SRE provided at school and sexual experiences/ awareness of the opposite sex |
| Looking back the mother felt she did not know what else there was to know about sexual matters, but did not have the knowledge of contraception mainly because of her Catholic up-bringing and the fact that sex was taboo and you shouldn't be having it until you are married. | Looking back the mother feel she did not know enough SRE and was often left wondering about sexual matters from a female point of view.             | SRE taught to parents | If parents were not taught the facts from school or parents, how were they to make informed choices over their sexual behaviours? | Historical family context and effects of religion                            |
| Learnt about SRE matters from reading books and piecing it together based on what her friends also knew.   | The mother learnt about SRE matters from listening to other people's conversations and by listening to her friends' experiences.                    | SRE taught to parents | Parents learnt through their peers and not school or family links.  | SRE and friends  |
| The mother felt she had adequate knowledge when she was about 16 years old.  | The mother felt she knew most aspects of SRE when she was 28 but feels she is still learning about sexual matters at the age of 35.                 | SRE taught to parents | Parents learnt about sexual matters later in life because of the nature of the subject being taboo.                               | Quality of SRE given and lack of parental knowledge                          |

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| Sex education could have been improved if parents had been more open and if it was delivered encompassing a range of things such as relationships, contraception, STIs and more about puberty and the changes that were to occur.                 | The mother feels that the SRE she was taught when younger could not have been improved at the time due to the topic being taboo and the act being dirty, but feels it is important to talk openly about sexual matters within the family.  | SRE taught to parents                            | Parents want better SRE for their own children as they have first hand experience of how it negatively affected them.                  | Quality of SRE given  |
| SRE is far better these days but feels it needs to give young people the knowledge of how to use contraception and to keep themselves safe.   | SRE is far better these days because it gives the information young people need. This is helped by sexual matters being discussed more openly.   | SRE taught to parents                            | Do parents think better SRE should be given to their children?   | SRE the norm and societal changes   |
| Sons feel that they talk to their mother more about SRE matters because she is there all of the time and their father isn't. Mother feels that her sons talk to her the most about SRE matters.   | Daughter mainly talks to her mum about sexual matters because she feels close to her and knows that her mum understands what she is experiencing with also being a girl herself. Father not present in the family home.  | Parental communication & SRE with their children | If the father is not present in the family home does this mean that children will ultimately talk to their mother?                     | Gendered experiences, positive relations with mother and exclusion of fathers                       |
| Sons feel that their mother teaches them the most about SRE matters because she sees it as her responsibility and wants the best for them. Mother talks to her sons the most about SRE matters because the father is never present to teach them. | Daughter thinks her mother talks to her about sexual matters because she wants to keep me safe and prepare me for making the right decisions over sex and sexual relationships. Mother thinks that her daughter and she talk because she is closer to her than the father and because they are both females. | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Parents who talk most to their children about sexual matters provide a caring, nurturing and protective role.                          | Gendered experiences, positive relations with mother, absence of father and parental responsibility |
| Sons feel their mother initiates the SRE conversations along with their sister. Mother feels that both her and her sons initiate conversations about sexual matters.  | Daughter thinks both her and her mother initiate the conversations regarding SRE matters. Mother thinks she mainly initiates the conversations regarding SRE matters, but her daughter will also ask her things.   | Parental communication & SRE with their children | If sexual matters are discussed from a young age does this allow for both parents and their children to initiate sexual conversations? | Preliminary age of SRE conversations and positive communications                                    |
| Conversations concerning sexual matters with their  | Daughter feels there is no set time SRE conversations occur, but will discuss  | Parental communication                           | Further confirmation that  | Shared experiences and media influences   |

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| mother normally occur at anytime – no set time or event. Mother feels that SRE conversations occur anytime, but it is often around meal times.  | topical things that come up on chat shows. Mother feels that there is no sex time SRE conversations occur because they talk quite openly all of the time.   | & SRE with their children                        | if parents and their children share activities SRE topics are more likely to be discussed.                           |   |
| Sons couldn't think of anything that they would not discuss with their mother. Mother does not feel that there is anything she wouldn't discuss with her sons or eldest daughter.   | Daughter discusses all aspects of sexual matters with her mother, but feels embarrassed discussing things with her father. Mother feels topics such as HIV and STIs are not discussed as openly because she does not have enough knowledge of these topics, but will discuss anything with her daughter the best she can. | Parental communication & SRE with their children | If parents show a willingness to discuss sexual matters with their children, is this reciprocated by their children? | Positive communications, Lack of parental knowledge and embarrassment associated with discussing sexual matters |
| Sons do not get embarrassed when discussing sexual matters with their mother. Mother does not get embarrassed when discussing sexual matters with her sons.   | Daughter does not get embarrassed talking to her mother about SRE matters, but feels her and her father would get embarrassed because they are not as close and she only sees her father on a weekend. Mother does not get embarrassed discussing SRE matters.  | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Sexual matters are only embarrassing to discuss if people don't know the facts and are not close to the person.      | Embarrassment associated with discussing sexual matters   |
| Sons think their friends and school would teach them the most about sexual matters if their mother didn't talk to them. Mother thinks her sons will learn from school and their older sister if she didn't teach them about sexual matters. | Daughter thinks her aunties or cousins would teach her about SRE if her mother didn't because she also feels close to them like with her mother. Parents think that her daughters' friends and her auntie would teach her the most about SRE matters if they didn't talk about SRE topics with her daughter.              | Parental communication & SRE with their children | If parents do not teach their children about sexual matters, school and other close family members would.            | SRE provided at school and SRE and friends  |
| Sons feel that their mother does not have the most up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach them, but with being a nurse she would know things the school  | Daughter feels that her mother does not have the most up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach her about SRE matters. Mother feels she does not necessarily have the knowledge to  | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Although children do not feel their mothers have the up-to-date-information  | Lack of parental knowledge  |

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| wouldn't and the school knows things she wouldn't. Mother feels she has the knowledge to teach her sons about sexual matters   | discuss aspects of SRE with her daughter, but would know where to go to find out the information if needed.  |  | to teach them about SRE topics, they still prefer to talk to her as she has information concerning sexual matters that they will not get taught about else where. |   |
| No restrictions on discussing SRE matters.   | Daughter feels her younger sister restricts SRE conversations, but mother and daughter talk about it when she has gone to bed. Mother feels that she is open with her youngest daughter as well so she does not see her restricting conversations between her and her eldest daughter. | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Further confirmation that younger siblings do prevent SRE conversations between mother and her other children.  | Human restrictions  |
| Sons feel that his family does talk openly about sexual matters. Mother feels that her family does talk openly about sexual matters.   | Daughter feels her family talk openly about sexual matters. Mother feels that her family is open when discussing sexual matters.   | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Parents/ children who perceive SRE to be the norm discuss sexual matters openly within the family.  | SRE as the norm   |
| Sons feel that his friends do not talk as openly with their parents, like they do, but feel it depends how confident they are with their parents. Mother feels that other families do not talk as openly as hers when discussing sexual matters with their children. | Daughter feels that other families do not discuss sexual matters as openly as hers. Mother feels her family is a lot more open when discussing sexual matters compared to other families and hers when she was younger.  | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Parents who were restricted on discussing sexual matters when they were younger plan to break the barriers for discussing sexual matters                          | Historical family context, SRE as the norm and societal changes |

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|  |   |  | within their own family.   |  |
| Sons feel that girls need to know more, but feel they learn a lot from having an older sister and friends who are of the opposite sex. Mother feels that more sex education is steered towards girls than boys, but feels boys and girls need to know about each other equally.                        | Daughter feels more sex education is given to girls than boys because fathers don't talk to their sons like mothers talk to their daughters. Mother feels more sex education is given to girls than boys because of the protective factors associated with females and reproduction.                                | Parental communication & SRE with their children | More sex education is given to girls at school and at home, especially if fathers do not speak to their sons about sexual matters. | Formal SRE                                   |
| Sons feel their mother wanted them to know about sexual matters from about the age of 12 years old. Mother wants her sons to be learning about sexual matters from as early in life as they will understand, but definitely before puberty (11/12) so they are prepared for what is to happen to them. | Daughter feels her mother would want her to know about sexual matters at about 10/11 years old when she is likely to start puberty. Mother would want her daughter to know about sexual matters as soon as possible, especially if children ask questions then they need the correct answers and not be fobbed off. | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Parents want better sex education for their own children that they received.   | Quality of SRE and historical family context |
| Son feels his parents are not involved in the SRE that is delivered at school. Mother does not feel that the school involves her in the sex education her sons receives.   | Daughter feels her mother is not involved in the SRE that is delivered at school. Mother feels she is not involved in the SRE that is given to her daughter at school.  | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Schools are required to involve parents in the SRE that they deliver.  | School to inform parents                     |
| Son would like parents to be more involved in the sex education that is provided at school. Mother would like to know more about what is taught and when it is to occur because this would prepare her for questions that may be asked and so she can raise things with their sons.                    | Daughter would prefer for her mother to have more involvement in the SRE she receives at school. Mother would prefer to be told what is being taught and when it is being taught so she can be prepared for any questions that may arise and so I can raise things with her that they may not have covered.         | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Schools could increase sexual communications within families if parents were told what is being taught to their child.             | Wishes of parents and their children         |

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| Sons use text books, computers and movies to learn about SRE matters. Mother feels her sons use the Internet, magazines and TV to learn about SRE matters.  | Daughter uses problem pages from magazines, soaps and chats shows on television to learn about SRE matters. Mother feels her daughter uses problem pages from magazines and TV to learn about SRE matters.                     | Media impact on SRE within the family | Why do different genders prefer different media sources for learning>   | Media influences                                  |
| Learns about facts and how the body works. Mother feels her sons learn about what acceptable behaviour is and try and identify what the norm is regarding sexual behaviour and relationships.   | Learns about what other people are experiencing. Mother feels that her daughter learns about what it is like for other people and that everybody is individual.  | Media impact on SRE within the family | Are children learning sexual matters from the media that they are not getting taught about elsewhere?   | Contribution of media sources                     |
| Prefers to use these sources to learn about sexual matters rather than talk to their mother. Mother thinks that her sons have been given the foundations of sex from her, but are now at a stage where they want to find out things for themselves. | Prefers to talk to her mum rather than use media sources to learn about SRE matters. Mother thinks that her daughter prefers to use many sources to learn about SRE matters, including the mother, her friends and television. | Media impact on SRE within the family | Do children want to learn from these sources as a way of advancing on the formal SRE they have been taught?   | Contribution of media sources                     |
| Thinks the media has quite a big impact over what they learn. Parents think the media has a big impact over what her sons learn especially as it comes from many different perspectives.  | Thinks that the impact of the media has a big impact over the SRE she learns. Mother thinks that the media has a massive impact over the SRE that her daughter learns because it comes from so many different perspectives.    | Media impact on SRE within the family | Do the media provide the answers from different perspectives so children can steer their own direction based on what they have been taught and how they feel? | Contribution of media sources and SRE as the norm |
| Thinks the media does not act as a deterrent but teaches you to take precautions. Mother thinks that the media can act as a deterrent, but thinks more consequences should be shown to act as a bigger deterrent.                                   | Thinks the media can act as a deterrent. Mother thinks that the media can sometimes act as a deterrent, but it glorifies the negative aspects of bad sexual relationships.   | Media impact on SRE within the family | Instead of glorifying sexual matters should the media show more of the consequences associated with   | Positive/ negative effects of the media           |



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|  |  |  | sexual matters?  |   |
| Sons think that the media helps them learn what it is like from the female perspective. Mother thinks that her sons learn about the opposite sex from the media because it sends messages to both sexes.   | Daughter thinks that the media helps her learn about the opposite sex. Mother thinks that the media helps young people learn about what it is like for the opposite sex.   | Media impact on SRE within the family  | It would appear the media add to children's knowledge based on what they are not taught at school.                       | Quality of SRE given, contribution of media sources and sexual experiences/ awareness of the opposite sex |
| Sons agree that they feel more confident with the knowledge they learn from media sources. Mother thinks that her sons feel more confident when using media sources to learn about SRE matters because it makes them question, which can help self-esteem. | Daughter feels more confident with the knowledge she learns from media sources. Mother thinks the media can help learn about the opposite sex, but also different sexualities, such as gays.   | Media impact on SRE within the family  | Does knowledge increase children's confidence?   | Contribution of media sources and sexual experiences/ awareness of the opposite sex                       |
| Thinks the media is a good thing because it teaches you things, but a bad thing in that it can instil fear about things that you may not have thought of at our age. Mother thinks the media is a good thing because of the above reasons.                 | Thinks the media is a good thing because it gives lots of information, but it can be a bad thing in that it promotes sex to younger people by giving them too much information. Mother thinks the media can be a good thing if the right messages are reinforced, but a bad thing if the correct information is not given. | Media impact on SRE within the family  | Even though there are negative aspect associated with the media, it does generate sexual conversations within the family | Positive/ negative effects of the media   |
| Sons do not follow any religion even though they attend a Catholic school. Mother seen the negative aspects of religion and wants better for her own children.   | Daughter does not follow any religion even though she is baptised as Catholic as it restricts people from finding out information. Mother see the negative aspects of religion and wants better for her own children.  | Impact of religion on discussing SRE within the family   | Parents and their children do not perceive religion to be a big part of their lives.                                     | Unimportance of religion  |
| <b>Impact of the Sense CD</b>  |  |  |  |   |
| Sons thought the CD was simple and straight forward, but gave the information needed. Mother thought the CD was good.  | Daughter thought the CD was good and liked the look of it. Mother thought the CD was good.   | Family members liked the content of the multimedia program and how it looked.  |  |   |
| Sons liked the quiz and the way the CD used real people.   | Mother and daughter thought the CD was very modern.  | The multimedia would appeal to young people as it is very modern and children like the sections where they are challenged. |  |   |

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| Mother thought the best thing about the CD was that it was very modern.  |  |  |
| Sons thought the fly was weird. Mother did not dislike anything in particular.   | Neither disliked anything in particular on the CD.   | Once again the 'fly' was perceived as a negative aspect of the multimedia program.   |
| Sons thought the CD would be good for young people of 12 to 15 years. Mother thought that certain aspects of the CD would be good for 10 year olds and then all other aspects when they were 11 or 12 years old. | Daughter thought CD would be good for young people her age = aged 15. Mother thought sections of the CD would be good for children as young as 9, but then leave sexual relationships for mid to late teens. | It was thought by parents that section of the multimedia program would be good for younger children and other more serious sections would be good for children from the age of 11 years.               |
| Sons would not feel uncomfortable watching any aspects of the CD as a family. Mother would not feel uncomfortable watching any aspect of the CD as a family.   | Would not feel uncomfortable watching the CD with her mother. Mother would not feel uncomfortable discussing any aspect of the CD with her daughter.   | Families are not uncomfortable watching any aspect of the multimedia program when sexual matters are discussed openly within the family.   |
| Sons do not think there were issues on the CD that they have not discussed as a family. Mother does not think there were issues on the CD that they have not discussed as a family.                              | No aspects of the CD that he has not discussed with her mother. No aspects of the CD that they have not discussed with her daughter, except maybe different sexualities.                                     | Due to discussing sexual matters openly within the family it was found that there were no topics on the multimedia program that the family had not discussed.  |
| Would prefer to use CD and talk to mother to learn about SRE matters.  | Would prefer to talk to her mother rather than use the CD to learn about sexual matters.   | Boys appear to prefer to use the multimedia program rather than talk to their mothers. This was regardless of whether sexual matters were discussed openly within the family.                          |
| Sons thought the CD would be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family. Mother thought the CD would be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family, but not hers.                      | CD would be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family, but not in his. CD would be useful when discussing sexual matters, but not in hers because they already talk openly.                    | Both families though the multimedia program would be beneficial in increasing sexual communications within families, but not necessarily theirs because they already talk openly about sexual matters. |
| Sons feel that the CD will prompt discussions with their mother. Mother did not feel that the CD would be good for generating conversations within her family because the  | Daughter feels that the CD would not be useful in improving SRE communications with her mother because they already talk openly. Mother feels that the CD would not be useful in improving SRE               | After watching the multimedia program it was felt that some sexual topics may arise within the family based on what they have seen.  |

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| issues in the CD have already been discussed.  | communications within their family because they have already discussed all sexual matters openly.  |   |
| Sons thought that parts of the CD were funny, especially some of the scenarios. Mother thought the CD was good because it covered all aspects of sex education.  | Daughter thought the CD was good, especially the fly because it made the CD fun to explore. Mother thought the CD was good.  | All family members thought that the multimedia program was a good resource to learn about sexual matters.   |
| Sons liked the way some of the aspects on the CD were funny which made them want to watch and explore the CD more. Mother thought the CD was good because it was presented in a non-serious way that was easy to follow. | Daughter thought the CD was good in showing different perspectives within relationships and the way that it used real characters made CD better. Mother liked every aspect of the CD, but liked the sections on relationships because it was more like a soap opera in that you could get involved with what was being said. | Children favoured the humour and the real life scenarios on the multimedia program and mothers thought it was an easy way to learn because it related to children watching soap operas on television.   |
| Sons thought the fly was annoying, but liked all other aspects of the CD. Mother liked all aspects of the CD.  | Daughter thought the CD could have been improved if there was a way that she could type in particular questions to be answered. Mother liked all aspects of the CD.  | Although the 'fly' was found to be annoying because it prevented concentration children like all others aspects of the multimedia program. However, it could have been improved if it was more of an interactive resource.  |
| Sons thought the CD was good for their ages and younger. Mother thought the CD was good for young people as young as 10 years old and upwards.   | Daughter thought the CD would be good for young people aged about 12 upwards. Mother thought the CD was good for young people from about the age of 9 or 10 years old.   | As with before the multimedia program was felt to be useful for children 10 years onwards.  |
| There were no aspects the sons would feel uncomfortable watching as a family. There were no aspects of the CD that the mother would feel uncomfortable watching as a family.   | Would not feel uncomfortable watching the CD with her mother. Mother would not feel uncomfortable watching the CD with their daughter.   | Since the family already discuss sexual matters openly within the family, none of the aspects of the multimedia program would be uncomfortable to watch as a family.  |
| Sons felt that there were no aspects of the CD that they had not discussed as a family. No aspects of the CD that the  | Daughter thought the CD covered more about what it was like for boys because as a family they tend to discuss it from a female perspective   | Parents and their children felt that the sections on the multimedia program had been discussed within the family. However, out of respect for her daughter's privacy the mother had not asked her daughter about sexual fantasies as it would be an invasion of her privacy, unless she |

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| mother had not discussed with her sons.  | with all being girls. Mother thought that as a family they have not discussed sexual fantasies as that would be an invasion of her daughter's privacy, but would talk about it if she wanted to.                          | wished to discuss it.  |
| Sons thought the CD would be useful when discussing sexual matters within other families, but just not theirs. Mother thought the CD would be good in generating conversations within the family, but just not with hers.  | Would prefer to talk to her mother rather than use the CD to learn about SRE matters. Mother thought the CD would be good in generating conversations within the family.  | Family members felt that the multimedia program would be good in generating sexual conversations, but just not so much in their families as a lot of the topics had already been raised due to them talking openly about sexual matters in the family context. |
| Sons felt that the CD would be good as a reference source, but would prefer to talk to their mother as they have done in the past because they have already discussed SRE matters openly within the family. Mother felt that the CD would not have any impact on how she and her sons communicate SRE matters within the family. | The daughter thought the CD would be good when discussing sexual matters within the family. Mother thought the CD has had an impact and aspects covered will be discussed based on personal situations within the family. | It was thought that the multimedia program would be good as a reference point that would raise sexual topics being discussed within families.  |

### **To investigate the following based on interviews 15 and 16**

- How SRE was taught to parents – e.g. which parent did they talk to about sexual matters and why? Sexual matters not discussed as openly when they were younger – Why?
- Was SRE taught to parents accurate? Did parents learn from listening to other peoples conversations? What age did parents have the SRE knowledge needed? How could it have been improved? Level of SRE taught by parents
- How SRE was taught to child - e.g. at school and at home? Is it embarrassing to discuss sexual matters? Why? Discussions with friends vs. parents? Why do parents discuss sexual matters more openly with them compared to how they were taught?
- Parental communication – e.g. more SRE given to different genders? Why?

- Age SRE is taught by parents – e.g. restrictions of discussing sexual matters openly within the family? Overcome, how?
- Initiation of SRE – e.g. when are SRE conversations likely to occur?
- Do parents feel they have the most up-to-date SRE to teach their children about sexual matters?
- Parent observation and teaching SRE at the right time
- Parental attitudes and impact on child – e.g. gays
- Impact of religion on parents and furthermore their children
- Media impact on child's SRE education
- Impact of the Sense CD on reducing barriers for families to discuss SRE.

### **Main categories from the generated themes after 16 interview sessions**

- ❖ **SRE taught to adolescents**
- ❖ **SRE taught to parents**
- ❖ **Parental communication of SRE with their children**
- ❖ **Media impact on SRE within the family**
- ❖ **Impact of the multimedia program on reducing barriers for discussing SRE within the family**
- ❖ **Effects of religion on discussing SRE in the family context**

| <b>Family # 17<br/>Mother (35) and Son (14)</b>  | <b>Family # 18<br/>Mother (35) and Son (15)</b>   | <b>Open Coding</b>        | <b>Axial Coding</b>  | <b>Selective<br/>Coding</b> |
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| The son had had a rushed tutorial at school and was given a roadshow that covered puberty, sex, contraception and STIs. The son has also had a sex education | Son was taught about puberty at primary school. Son taught very little at secondary school and mainly remembers learning about sexual matters from his friends. Mother does not know what sex | SRE taught to adolescents | Sex education is very poor. This leads to children to learn about sexual matters | SRE provided at school      |

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| performance which was given to the whole year group. Mother does not know what SRE matters her son has been told about.  | education has been given to her son at school. Even though she knew of the sex education offered at Catholic schools, she still chose to send her son to a Catholic school because she wanted him to have morals and respect.   |                           | from friends.  |  |
| SRE taught in mixed classes and son does not have a preference or single or mixed classes. Mother does not know whether SRE her son receives is taught in single or mixed sex classes.   | Sex education at secondary school was taught in a mixed class of about 30, but separately at primary school. Does not mind mixed classes when being taught sex education as it helps learn about the opposite sex. Mother does not know whether sex was taught in single or mixed sex classes, but mother guesses that it is mixed sex. | SRE taught to adolescents | Children don't mind mixed sex classes as it allows them to find out the experiences of the opposite sex.                               | Formal SRE and sexual experiences/ awareness of the opposite sex                             |
| Gave no signposting of where to go for further information or advice. Mother does not know whether signposting was given to her son.   | Gave no signposting of where to go for further information or advice. Mother does not know if any signposting was given to his son.   | SRE taught to adolescents | With children attending Catholic schools no signposting was given.   | SRE provided at school   |
| Son learnt a lot at the roadshow, but has also been told things by his mum and dad. Mother feels her son has learnt the most SRE from his father.  | Mum, step-dad and friends has taught him the most about SRE matters. Mother feels that she, her husband and friends have taught her son the most about SRE matters.   | SRE taught to adolescents | Do parents ensure they teach their children about sexual matters if they attend a Catholic school as they won't teach certain subjects | Influence of joint parents, SRE provided at school, gendered experiences and SRE and friends |
| Prefer to learn about SRE matters from his father because he is a male and knows what he is experiencing and sometimes gets embarrassed talking to his mum. Mother thinks her son prefers to talk to his dad because of them both being of the same sex. | Son prefers her friends to teach him about SRE matters. Mother thinks her son prefers to talk to his step-dad and friends about sexual matters because they are all males and have or are experiencing the same things.   | SRE taught to adolescents | It would appear males prefer to learn about male experiences from their father, or fatherly figure.                                    | Gendered experiences, embarrassment associated with discussing sexual matters                |

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| Son thinks that his father has initiated conversations regarding SRE matters. Mother thinks that her son's father mainly initiates SRE conversations.  | Son thinks his mum and step-dad have initiated conversations on sexual matters. Mother feels that she and her husband have mainly initiated conversations regarding SRE with her son.   | SRE taught to adolescents | The willingness of both parents and children increase sexual communications                                | Positive communications and SRE as the norm             |
| Son does not get embarrassed when discussing sexual matters with his father, but sometimes does when talking to his mother especially about relationships and boy things. Mother does not find it embarrassing to talk about sex with her son, but feels he gets embarrassed therefore, prefers to talk to his dad because he can be more supportive with him being a male and the experiences he will have had from a male perspective. | Son does not get embarrassed discussing sexual matters with his mother or step-dad. Mother does not get embarrassed discussing sexual matters with her son, but feels he gets embarrassed talking to her.                             | SRE taught to adolescents | Boys as well as girls get embarrassed talking to their parents about their personal relationships          | Embarrassment associated with discussing sexual matters |
| Started to learn about sexual matters from about 13 years old. Mother feels her sons started learning all he knows about sexual matters in the last 1-2 years (12-14 years).   | Started to learn about sexual matters when he was about 11/ 12 years old. Mother wanted her son to know about sexual matters in a serious way from about the age of 12 or 13.   | SRE taught to adolescents | Both boys learnt about sexual matters at an age when they are likely to experience puberty                 | Formal SRE  |
| Son felt he was left needing to know more about STIs. Mother feels that her son has the knowledge through talking to his father and friends.   | Son felt he was left needing to know more about contraception. Mother feels her son has the facts and knowledge of all SRE matters, but feels he is at the stage of processing the information that he has been told.                 | SRE taught to adolescents | Children are dissatisfied with the SRE provided at school as it does not teach them all they need to know. | Formal SRE  |
| Would prefer to be taught about sexual facts from school, but then also learn from his mum and dad. Mother would prefer for her son to be taught about sexual matters from her, the sons father or an  | Son prefers to be taught about sexual matters from his mother and step-dad and then an outside visitor to come into the school. Mother would prefer for ultimately the school to teach her son about sexual matters, but then her and | SRE taught to adolescents | Parents would prefer for schools to teach their sons and they add to this. Does this                       | Formal SRE and lack of parental knowledge               |

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| authoritarian person who visits the school and is able to relate to young people.  | her husband add to that information so he understands what he has been taught.  |                           | suggest parents do not have the SRE knowledge to teach their sons?   |                 |
| Does not feel that he picks up the information he needs to know from listening to other people's conversations without realising it.   | Feels he learns things from listening to other people's conversations.  | SRE taught to adolescents | Learn from listening to peoples conversation whether we want to or not.  | SRE and friends |
| Son talks to his best friends about sex and there experiences. Does not get embarrassed and feels he can trust his friends. Mother knows that her son discusses sexual matters with their friends, mainly sex, who is doing it, who they fancy and what they have experienced.   | Son discusses sexual matters with his friends, mainly to learn what it is like for them and what they are experiencing. Mother feels that her son talk to his friends about boys things they have or have not done – mainly bragging!   | SRE taught to adolescents | Children talk to their friends because they can relate to one another's experiences.   | SRE and friends |
| There are some SRE matters that he would discuss with his friends, but would tell his parents about these conversations if they asked. Mother feels that her son will discuss things with their friends that they would not discuss with her, but feels he would then talk to his dad or come to her for advice if they were unsure about something. | There are no SRE matters that she would discuss with her friends and not his mother or step-dad. Mother feels that her son will discuss things with his friends that he would not discuss with her, but thinks it will mainly be to do with girls and what boys experience as they grow-up. | SRE taught to adolescents | Children talk to their friends about their experiences but would talk more to their parents about these conversations if they needed to know more. | SRE and friends |
| Son feels that he can talk to his friends because he trusts them and what they say doesn't go any further. Mother thinks that her sons will talk to their friends to try and understand the best way   | Does not think that his friends know more than him about sexual matters. Mother thinks that her son talks to his friends to try and look clever and grown-up.   | SRE taught to adolescents | Even if children don't admit it they talk to their friends to act like they know more than they  | SRE and friends |



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| to behave.  |   |                       | do.  |  |
| Mother given a period talk with other girls in secondary and the whole year were shown an animated video on sex and how to put a condom on. Also covered the STIs that were prevalent at the time (1970s).                  | Mother got taught about puberty and the facts on reproduction in biology class.   | SRE taught to parents | As previously found parents were given poor SRE which did not provided them with the SRE knowledge needed. | Quality of SRE and lack of parental knowledge          |
| The mother's parents did not talk to her about sex at all.  | The mother's parents did not talk to her about sex at all simply because the mother's mother was a strict Catholic and both parents being of the old school.          | SRE taught to parents | Due to lack of religion and the taboo nature of SRE the subject was not discussed.                         | Effects of religion and historical family context      |
| The mother's parents did not comment on the SRE they received, but knew her parents did not have any in the way they did not discuss the matter of sex.   | The mother's parents did not comment on the SRE they received, but assumes have not been given any due to religious purposes.   | SRE taught to parents | What factors prohibited parent's parents from discussing sexual matters?                                   | Historical family context                              |
| The mother feels her parents did not have the knowledge to teach her about sexual matters.  | The mother did not know if her parents had the most up-to-date knowledge to teach her about sexual matters, but felt they would be ashamed to discuss sexual matters. | SRE taught to parents | Are there any other factors which prevented SRE topics being discussed?                                    | Lack of parental knowledge and the effects of religion |
| Mother feels her family did not talk openly about sexual matters because it was not the norm, even though her sister fell pregnant when she was 15. Parents talked to the sister about pregnancy after she became pregnant. | The mother's family did not talk openly about sexual matters due to their strict Catholic up-bringing.  | SRE taught to parents | Due to the stigma and religious factors SRE was not discussed with parents when they were younger.         | Effects of religion and historical family context      |
| Mother learnt the most SRE from her older sister and friends.   | Mother learnt the most SRE from her friends.  | SRE taught to parents | What aspects of SRE did parents learn from their friends?  | SRE and friends  |
| Mother learnt about sexual matters from the age of 12.  | Mother learnt about sexual matters from the age of 14.  | SRE taught to parents | Learnt about SRE matters   | Effects of religion and                                |

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|   |  |                       | later when attending a Catholic school.   | quality of SRE given   |
| Looking back the mother felt she did all there was to know about sexual matters simply because of her older sister's experiences and what she was told.   | Looking back the mother felt she did not know enough SRE and was often left wondering about sexual matters.                                  | SRE taught to parents | If parents were not taught the facts from school or their parents how were they suppose to make informed choices over the sexual behaviours?        | SRE provided at school and sexual experiences/ awareness of the opposite sex   |
| Learnt about SRE matters from her sisters and piecing the rest together based on what her friends also knew and the experiences they had had.   | The mother learnt about SRE matters from listening to other people conversations.  | SRE taught to parents | Parent learnt through the information they heard and by piecing this together with previous knowledge.  | SRE and friends and historical family context                                  |
| The mother felt she had adequate knowledge when she was about 16 years old.   | The mother felt she had adequate knowledge when she was about 15/ 16 years old when she had experienced sex and had relationships with boys. | SRE taught to parents | Parents learn about sexual matters later in life as they were not told the facts by school or their parents.  | Quality of SRE given, lack of parental knowledge and historical family context |
| Sex education could have been improved if the school had explained the information given in the video. The video was given, but no discussion was given based on the content. Sex education could have also been better if she was encouraged to ask questions when unsure about something and take the stigma off the subject. | The mother feels the SRE could have been improved if sexual matters had been openly discussed within the family.                             | SRE taught to parents | Parents want better SRE for their own children as they have first hand experiences of how it negatively affected them not having all the SRE facts. | Quality of SRE given   |
| SRE is far better these days  | SRE is far better these days because it is   | SRE taught to         | Do parents think  | SRE the norm   |

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| because it is far more openly discussed.  | far more openly discussed.   | parents  | better SRE should be given to their children?  | and societal changes                                   |
| Mother does not feel that the lack of sex education she had impacts on how open she is with her son because she is very open with her son when talking about sexual matters.  | Mother does not feel that the lack of sex education she had impacts on how open she is with her son because she is very open with her son when talking about sexual matters.   | SRE taught to parents                            | Parents are far more open with their children that their parents were when they were younger.                                | SRE the norm and societal changes                      |
| Mother does not know what SRE has been taught to her son but knows he has had some sex education based on questions that he has asked.  | Mother does not know what SRE has been taught to her son but knows he has had some sex education based on questions that he has asked.   | SRE taught to parents                            | Parents have not formally been told of the SRE the school has taught their child.  | Schools inform parents                                 |
| Son mainly talks to his dad about sexual matters, but sometimes his mum as well. Mother feels that her son talks to his father the most about SRE matters.  | Son mainly talks to his mum about sexual matters because he has known her all his life and feels closest to her. Mother feels that her son talks to her and her husband equally about sexual matters.  | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Children will talk to the parent they most feel comfortable with, but more so if this parent is the same-sex.                | Positive communications and gendered experiences       |
| Son talks to his dad because he knows what he is going through with being a male himself. Son thinks his father talks to him about sexual matters to keep him safe and not make the same mistakes that his dad did when he was younger. Mother feels her son and his father talk the most about SRE matters because of how close they are and with them being the same sex. | Son talks to his mum about sexual matters, but also prefers to talk to his step-dad about boy things because he knows what it is like with being a male himself. Mother feels that her and her husband gang-up on her son when discussing sexual matters just so they can teach her son about sexual matters from a male and female perspective. | Parental communication & SRE with their children | If parents are willing to discuss sexual matters with their children, does this encourage children to talk to their parents? | Positive communications and gendered experiences       |
| Son feels that he and his father initiates the SRE conversations. Mother feels that both her ex-husband can relate to their son   | Son thinks that both he and his mother/step-dad initiate the conversations regarding SRE matters. Mother feels that she and her husband mainly initiate the  | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Parents will initiate SRE conversations with their   | Positive communications and influence of joint parents |

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| better and will initiate SRE conversations mainly from a joke point of view.   | conversations regarding SRE matters.   |  | children, even if in a joking way to break the ice.   |   |
| Conversations concerning sexual matters with his father normally occur when playing football or on the way to the match. Mother feels her and her son discuss SRE matters just in general way, but feels he will talk to his dad a lot more when their son stops at his house on a Wednesday and Friday.   | Son feels there is no set time SRE conversations occur within the family. Mother feels that SRE conversations occur generally when her son has new girlfriends.                                  | Parental communication & SRE with their children | If parents spend more one-to-one time with their children does this increase sexual conversations to occur?   | Shared experiences                                      |
| Sons couldn't think of anything that they would not discuss with their father. Mother would not discuss sexual fantasies with her son because that is personal, but does not push other conversations about sex, but feels his dad would discuss anything with their son.  | Son discusses all aspects of sexual matters with his mother and step-dad. Mother feels that most, if not all topics regarding SRE have been discussed with her son either by her or her husband. | Parental communication & SRE with their children | If parents show a willingness to discuss sexual matters with their children, is this reciprocated by their children? Plus do parents appreciate the boundaries for not invading children's privacy? | Positive communications and invasion of privacy         |
| Son does not get embarrassed when discussing sexual matters with his dad, but sometimes his mother. Mother does not get embarrassed when discussing sexual matters with her son, but feels he gets embarrassed talking to her, however the mother and son have not actually discussed sex, but feels her son would come to her if he needed to know something or was in trouble. | Son does not get embarrassed when discussing sexual matters with his mother or step-dad. Mother or step-father does not get embarrassed discussing SRE matters.                                  | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Sexual matters can be embarrassing to discuss if children perceive their parents to not know what they are experiencing.  | Embarrassment associated with discussing sexual matters |

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| Sons think the clinic and friends would teach him the most about sexual matters if his parents didn't talk to him. Mother thinks her son will learn from friends about sexual matters if he did not talk to her and his father.   | Son thinks his friends would teach him about SRE if his mother and step-dad didn't. Mother thinks that her son would learn the most about SRE matters from school if they didn't talk about SRE topics with her son.                                 | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Children would rely on their friends to teach them about sexual matters if their parents didn't.                              | SRE and friends   |
| Son feels that his parents do know a lot, but feels that people at the roadshow have taught him more because they are professionals. Mother does not feel she has the knowledge to teach her son about sexual matters.  | Son feels that his mother and step-dad know a lot of things, but not sure if they have the most up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach him about SRE matters. Mother feels her and her husband have the knowledge to discuss aspects of SRE with her son. | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Children perceive their parents to know about SRE matters but feel professionals are able to teach them more about SRE facts. | SRE and school and lack of parental knowledge                   |
| No restrictions on discussing SRE matters.  | No restrictions on discussing SRE matters.   | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Not having younger siblings provides no restrictions on discussing sexual matters.  | Human restrictions  |
| Son feels that his family does talk openly about sexual matters. Mother feels that her family does talk openly about sexual matters but the conversation occurs as a result of her son initiating the conversation with her whereas his father is a lot more open and would initiate the conversation with their son. | Son feels his family talk openly about sexual matters. Mother feels that her family is open when discussing sexual matters, even if SRE matters are discussed in a joking manner.  | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Parents/ children who perceive SRE to be the norm discuss sexual matters openly within the family.                            | SRE as the norm   |
| Son feels that his friends do not talk as openly with their parents as he does. Mother feels that other families are the same as hers when discussing sexual matters with their children.   | Son does not know how other families discuss sexual matters. Mother feels her family is open when discussing sexual matters, but feels other families could be different.  | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Parents perceive their family to be open when discussing sexual matters, which is different to how it was for them.           | Historical family context, SRE as the norm and societal changes |
| Son feels that the sex education is   | Son feels that equal sex education is  | Parental   | More SRE is   | Formal SRE  |

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| aimed more at girls, but boys are given equal sex education. Mother feels that more sex education is aimed more at girls because they can get pregnant and the boys can walk away.  | given to both boys and girls. Mother feels more sex education is given to girls than boys because of the protective factors associated with females and reproduction.   | communication & SRE with their children          | aimed at the female perspective.   |  |
| Son feels his parents would want him to know about sexual matters from about the age of 12 or 13 years old. Mother wants her sons to be learning about sexual matters when he starts to experience changes when growing up.   | Son feels his mother would want him to know about sexual matters at about 10/11 years old. Mother would want her son to know about sexual matters from about the age of 12 or 13.   | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Parents want better sex education for their own children than they received.   | Quality of SRE given and historical family context                 |
| Son feels his parents are not involved in the SRE that is delivered at school. Mother does not feel that the school involves her in the sex education her son receives.   | Son feels his mother and step-dad are not involved in the SRE that is delivered at school. Mother feels she is not involved in the SRE that is given to her son at school.  | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Schools are required to involve parents in the SRE that they deliver.  | Schools to inform parents  |
| Son feels his parents would not want to be more involved in the sex education that is provided at school, but he has told them as much as teachers however, he learnt the most from professionals that came into school. Mother would like to know more about what is taught and when it is to occur because she feels she may be in a better position to ask questions based on what he has been taught. | Son would not be bothered if his mother and step-dad were more involved in the SRE he receives at school. Mother would prefer to be told what is being taught and when it is being taught so she can be prepared for any questions that may arise and so she can raise things with her son. | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Parents would like to know more about what is taught to their child so they can be prepared for sexual matters to be discussed and initiate sexual conversations with their child at the time SRE is taught. | Schools to inform parents and wishes of parents and their children |
| Sons use only television to learn about SRE matters. Mother feels her son uses TV and films to learn about SRE matters.   | Son does not use the media to find out about sexual matters but instead talks to his mum, step-dad and friends. Mother feels her son uses the Internet to learn   | Media impact on SRE within the family            | Why do children prefer different media sources to learn about SRE  | Media influences   |

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|  | about SRE matters.  |                                       | topics?  |  |
| Learns about things like teenage pregnancy and relationships. Mother feels her sons learn about relationships and thinks that messages are reinforced based on what he already knows about sexual matters.   | Does not learn from media sources. Mother feels that her son will learn from pornographic websites and things to do with what it is like for women.   | Media impact on SRE within the family | Are children learning about sexual matters from the media that they are not getting taught elsewhere or do the media help in understanding the facts that are given? | Contribution of media sources          |
| Prefers to ask his parents about sexual matter rather than use media sources. Mother thinks that her son prefers to find out sexual matters from his friends, dad and her rather than media sources.   | Prefers to talk to his mother, step-dad and friends rather than use the media to learn about sexual matters. Mother thinks that her son prefers to use the Internet to learn about SRE matters because it is so easy to access what he wants to look at or learn about.             | Media impact on SRE within the family | Children prefer to get the SRE facts from parents, but then use the media to learn more.   | Contribution of media sources          |
| Thinks the media has an impact when showing you what you don't want for yourself (e.g. pregnancy). Mother thinks that the media may not have such a big impact over what her sons because he is normally doing other things whilst watching TV or watching videos. | Son does not think that the media has too bigger an impact over the SRE he learns. Mother thinks that the media has a massive impact over the SRE that her son learns, but feels that the media bombard people with negative and tasteless information associated with SRE matters. | Media impact on SRE within the family | Parent think the media have a massive impact over what sexual matters their children learn.  | Contribution of media sources          |
| Thinks the media does not act as a deterrent. Mother thinks that the media can act as a deterrent, but thinks it would be better if the main points to deter could be shown at the end of programmes and films.  | Thinks the media can act as a deterrent for people who watch TV, read magazines, etc. Mother thinks that the media can sometimes act as a deterrent, but it glamorises sex and sexual behaviours.   | Media impact on SRE within the family | Instead of glorifying sexual matters should the media make more of an awareness of the consequences associated with sexual matters?                                  | Positive/negative effects of the media |
| Son does not feel he relates to what is being shown on the television because it is not real. Mother thinks her son will relate  | Son does not use the media to learn about SRE matters and therefore does not relate to the media messages. Mother thinks that her son will relate to what he sees in  | Media impact on SRE within the family | Children sometimes feel they do not learn about sexual   | Media influences                       |

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| to the thinks that he see in the media.   | the media, but feels girls will relate to media aspects more because they watch more soaps and read more problem pages.  |  | matters from media sources, but parents think that it does even if they don't realise it.   |   |
| Sons think that the media helps him learn what it is like from the female perspective. Mother thinks that her son learns about the opposite sex from the media.   | Son thinks that the media helps him learn about the opposite sex. Mother thinks that the media helps young people learn about what it is like for the opposite sex.  | Media impact on SRE within the family                      | Media help in learning about the opposite sex.  | Contribution of media sources and sexual experiences/ awareness of the opposite sex |
| Son does not feel more confident with the knowledge he learns from media sources. Mother does not think that her son feels more confident when using media sources to learn about SRE matters.  | Son does not use the media to learn about SRE matters and therefore does not feel more confident with the messages from the media. Mother does not think that her son will become more confident from what he learns from the media.   | Media impact on SRE within the family                      | Does increased knowledge increase confidence?   | Contribution of media sources and sexual experiences/ awareness of the opposite sex |
| Thinks the media is a good thing because it teaches you things, but a bad think in that it can pass out the wrong messages. Mother thinks the media can be a good thing in that it can generate sexual conversations, but a bad thing in that it can sometimes send out the wrong messages that can be ambiguous and confusing. | Thinks the media can be a good thing because it gives information, but it can be bad in that it covers stuff that you don't need to know about. Mother thinks the media can be a good thing if the right messages are reinforced, but a bad thing in that very young children are finding out things too young – non age specific! | Media impact on SRE within the family                      | Even though there are negative aspects associated with the media, it does generate sexual conversations within the family.            | Positive/ negative effects of the media   |
| Does not feel that religion influences the SRE that they receive. Mother thinks religion influences the SRE that parents give to their children.  | Son not sure if religion influences the SRE that he receives. Mother definitely thinks that religion influenced the SRE she received, but not now because sex is talked about a lot more in society and is not something to be ashamed of.   | Impact of religion on discussing SRE within the family     | SRE is not affected by religion like it used to be because it is talked about far more openly within society and has become the norm. | Unimportance of religion, societal changes and SRE as the norm                      |
| <b>Impact of the Sense CD</b>   |  |  |   |   |
| Son thought the CD was good   | Son thought the CD was good, but it  | All family members thought the multimedia program was good |   |   |



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| because it was interesting and covered lots of topics. Mother thought the CD was good, modern and colourful.  | didn't teach him anything. Mother thought the CD was good.   | and that it had lots of positive features.   |
| Sons liked the fly the most. Mother thought the best thing about the CD was that it had lots of sections.   | Son thought the CD was good in that it allowed you to select information that you wanted to know more about. Mother thought the CD was very good when covering puberty and body parts. | All family members liked the variety of sections on the multimedia program.  |
| Did not dislike anything in particular. Mother thought the continuous noises on the CD could be annoying and distracting.   | Did not dislike anything in particular.  | Although there were very few aspects that were disliked on the multimedia program one of the mothers found the continuous noise to be irritating.  |
| Sons thought the CD would be good for young people of 13 to 16 years. Mother thought that the CD suited young people from the age of 13 or 14.  | Son thought CD would be good for young people her aged between 10 and 14. Mother thought sections of the CD would be good for children as young as 9 or 10.                            | Although family members felt the multimedia program was appropriate for the children's age group one of the mothers thought that it could be used for children as young as nine or ten.  |
| Sons did not know whether he would feel uncomfortable watching aspects of the CD as a family. Mother would feel uncomfortable watching sexual fantasies and the mother feels her son would be embarrassed watching the CD together. | Would not feel uncomfortable watching the CD with his mother or step-dad. Mother did not think she would feel uncomfortable discussing any aspect of the CD with her son.              | It would appear that in families where mothers and their children don't discuss private details the sexual fantasies section of the multimedia program would be embarrassing to watch. However, in families where mothers talk to their sons openly these aspects would not be embarrassing as they had already been discussed openly within the family. |
| Son has not discussed all aspects of the CD with him mum, but feels he has with his dad. Mother does not think they have discussed much on STIs.  | There were no aspects of the CD that the son has not discussed with his mother or step-dad and visa-versa.   | In families where the mother does not talk to her son about sexual matters there were aspects of the multimedia program that had not been discussed. However, in families where sexual matters have been discussed openly many of the aspects had been discussed.  |
| Would prefer to talk to his parents about SRE matters.  | Would prefer to talk to his mother and step-dad rather than use the CD to learn about sexual matters.  | Both sons expressed a wish to talk to their parents rather than use the multimedia program to learn about sexual matters.  |
| Sons thought the CD would be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family. Mother thought the CD would be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family.   | Son thought the CD would not be useful when discussing sexual matters within his family. CD would be useful as it might raise things that her son wants to talk about.                 | It was found that in families where sexual matters were not openly discussed that the multimedia program would be useful in generating sexual conversations. However, the multimedia program was not found to be a useful resource in families where sexual matters were discussed openly.   |

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| Son feels that the CD will not prompt discussions with his mother. Mother did not feel that the CD helped in that she did not learn everything there was to do with sex and STIs to discuss it more with her son.                              | Son feels that the CD would not be useful in improving SRE communications with his family because they already talk openly. Mother feels that the CD would not be useful in improving SRE communications within her family because they have already discussed most if not all sexual matters openly. | The multimedia program was found to not be useful in families where sexual matters were discussed openly.   |
| Son thought that the CD was quite good. Mother thought the CD was good because it covered all the things that appeal to young people.  | Son thought the CD was good, but too young for him. Mother thought the CD was good.   | All of the family members thought that the multimedia program was a good resource.  |
| Son liked the virtual clinic section of the CD because that section taught him the most. Mother thought the graphics on the CD were good and the way the fly pointed out the most important information.                                       | Son thought the choice of sections was good. Mother liked how the CD had lots of section and the way it covered different types of relationships.   | One of the sons liked the virtual clinic section as it taught him the most and other family members liked the variety of topics included in the resource.   |
| Sons liked all aspects of the CD. Mother thought the noises on the CD were annoying but also felt that it was not that user friendly because it was hard to navigate around the different sections.  | Son liked all aspects of the CD. Mother liked all aspects of the CD.  | All family members liked all aspects of the multimedia program, except one of the mothers who still found the continuous noise to be irritating.  |
| Son thought the CD was good for young people aged between 13 and 15. Mother thought the CD was good for young people aged 13 to 16.  | Son thought the CD would be good for young people aged about 9/ 10 upwards. Mother thought the CD was good for young people from the age 10 years old.  | In families where sexual matters were not discussed as openly, it was thought the multimedia program should be used from the age of 13. However, in families where sexual matters were discussed openly they thought it would be useful for children younger, at the age of 10. |
| The son would feel uncomfortable watching the CD with his mum especially when it mentioned ejaculation, but would maybe watch the CD with his dad because they have talked about things such as wet-dreams and masturbation. The mother things | Would not feel uncomfortable watching the CD with his mother and step-dad. Mother would not feel uncomfortable watching the CD with her daughter.   | Aspects of the multimedia program were found to be embarrassing to watch as a family whereby sexual matters were not discussed openly.  |

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| her son would feel uncomfortable watching the CD as a family.   |   |   |
| Son has not discussed oral sex with his parents or his friends because that is a very private thing between two people. The mother had not discussed sexual fantasies and masturbation.   | Son feels that his family has discussed pretty much everything to do with sexual matters. Mother thought that as a family they have not discussed sexual fantasies in great detail as that would be an invasion of her son's privacy, but would talk about it if he wanted to.                              | Young people will not discuss things with their parents if they perceive them to be private to them. Parents also respect their children's wishes and do not invade their personal space and thoughts   |
| Sons thought the CD would be useful when discussing sexual matters within families, but felt it would also be good if the CD was available at school. Mother thought the CD would be good in generating conversations within the families where sex is not discussed openly.  | Would prefer to talk to his mother, step-dad and friends rather than use the CD to learn about SRE matters. Mother thought the CD would be good in generating conversations within the family.  | It was thought that the multimedia program would be useful in generating sexual conversations within the family and that the resource should be made available within schools.  |
| Sons felt that the CD is good at giving information and facts, but would prefer to talk to his parents about sexual matters as he feels they know a lot more because of life experiences. Mother felt she had learnt things from the CD, but does not feel that it has made her more comfortable at discussing sexual matters with her son. | Son thought the CD would be good when discussing sexual matters within some families, but not his. However the son thought the CD would also be useful in the school setting. Mother thought the CD has had an impact and aspects covered will be discussed based on personal situations within the family. | It was thought that the multimedia program was useful in providing facts and generating sexual conversations within the family. However, children preferred to speak to their parents more as they have life experiences which offer more needed information than the multimedia program. |

**To investigate the following based on interviews 17 and 18**

- How SRE was taught to parents – e.g. which parent did they talk to about sexual matters and why? Sexual matters not discussed as openly when they were younger – Why?
- Was SRE taught to parents accurate? Did parents learn from listening to other peoples conversations? What age did parents have the SRE knowledge needed? How could it have been improved? Level of SRE taught by parents
- How SRE was taught to child - e.g. at school and at home? Is it embarrassing to discuss sexual matters? Why? Discussions with friends vs. parents? Why do parents discuss sexual matters more openly with them compared to how they were taught?
- Parental communication – e.g. more SRE given to different genders? Why?
- Age SRE is taught by parents – e.g. restrictions of discussing sexual matters openly within the family? Overcome, how?
- Initiation of SRE – e.g. when are SRE conversations likely to occur?
- Do parents feel they have the most up-to-date SRE to teach their children about sexual matters?
- Parent observation and teaching SRE at the right time
- Impact of religion on parents and furthermore their children
- Media impact on child's SRE education
- Impact of the Sense CD on reducing barriers for families to discuss SRE.

### **Main categories from the generated themes after 18 interview sessions**

- ❖ **SRE taught to adolescents**
- ❖ **SRE taught to parents**
- ❖ **Parental communication of SRE with their children**
- ❖ **Media impact on SRE within the family**
- ❖ **Impact of the multimedia program on reducing barriers for discussing SRE within the family**
- ❖ **Effects of religion on discussing SRE in the family context**

| Family # 19<br>Mother (38) and Daughter (14) | Family # 20<br>Mother (44) and Daughter (15) | Open Coding | Axial Coding | Selective<br>Coding |
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| Daughter has had a video on sex education and then followed up the content in PSHE form classes over a period of 5 weeks. Mother knows that SRE matters such as periods, sex and about reproduction were taught, but her daughter is now at an age where she is reluctant to discuss sex and sexual matters. | At primary school the daughter had a video on periods. Then at 12 had more sex education which covered puberty and then at the age of 13 she had the Sex Education Roadshow and the content has been backed up in biology class covering puberty, sex, body parts, contraception, STIs and relationships. Based on what the daughter has told her mother she knows the topics that have been taught and when the messages are reinforced. The mother then contributes to this by talking to her daughter. | SRE taught to adolescents | Why does SRE differ so much between schools?  | SRE provided at school  |
| SRE was taught in mixed classes and daughter does not have a preference or single or mixed sex classes. Mother does not know whether the SRE her daughter receives is taught in single or mixed sex classes.   | Sex education at primary school was single sex, but then at secondary school sex education was taught in a mixed class of about 30. Daughter prefers mixed sex classes. Mother knows that sex education is taught to her daughter in a mixed class of about 20-30 pupils.   | SRE taught to adolescents | Children prefer for mixed sex classes when teaching about SRE topics.                             | Formal SRE  |
| Gave signposting of where to go for further information or advice at the Sex Education Roadshow. Mother does not know whether sign posting was given to her daughter.  | Signposting of where to go for further information or advice was given at the Roadshow. Mother thinks that signposting was given to her daughter as she knows the websites she accesses.  | SRE taught to adolescents | Children do not attend faith schools and therefore signposting was given.                         | SRE provided at school  |
| Daughter has learnt the most sex education from school. Mother feels her daughter has learnt the most SRE from school and friends.   | Mum has taught her the most about SRE matters. Mother feels that she and school have taught her daughter the most about SRE matters.  | SRE taught to adolescents | Children learn the SRE facts from school and then sometimes more information is given by parents. | SRE provided at school  |
| Prefer to learn about SRE matters from his school and roadshow staff because they have a greater understanding of what you are talking about and experiencing. Mother thinks her daughter  | Daughter prefers her mum about SRE matters because they have a close relationship. Mother thinks her daughter prefers to talk to her and be taught by school with regards to sex education.   | SRE taught to adolescents | If families are not embarrassed to talk about sexual matters then they prefer to talk about       | SRE provided at school, SRE and friends, embarrassment associated with discussing |

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| prefers to talk to friends because she gets embarrassed talking to her.   |  |                           | SRE matters within the family.  | sexual matters  |
| Daughter thinks that teachers have initiated conversations regarding SRE matters. Mother thinks that she has mainly initiated SRE conversations with her daughter.  | Daughter thinks both her mum and her have initiated conversations on sexual matters. Mother feels that she and her daughter initiate conversations regarding SRE.  | SRE taught to adolescents | SRE initiated by children, parent and school.   | SRE provided at school, positive communications and SRE as the norm                         |
| Daughter gets embarrassed when discussing sexual matters with her mother because it is personal and prefers to keep things to herself. Mother does not find it embarrassing to talk about sex with her daughter but feels he gets embarrassed and therefore prefers to talk to her friends. | Daughter does not get embarrassed discussing sexual matters with her mother. Mother does not get embarrassed discussing sexual matters with her daughter.  | SRE taught to adolescents | SRE can be embarrassing if parents probe into the private life of their children when they don't want to talk about sexual matters. | Embarrassment associated with discussing sexual matters and invasion of privacy             |
| Started to learn about sexual matters from about 10/ 11 years old. Mother feels her daughter started learning all he knows about sexual matters at about the age of 11.   | Started to learn about sexual matters properly when she was about 10/11 years old. Mother talked to her daughter about sexual matters at an age she would start to understand (6 or 7).  | SRE taught to adolescents | Sexual matters less embarrassing when discussed from a young age.   | Preliminary age of SRE conversations  |
| Daughter felt she was not left needing to know more about sexual matters. Mother does not know if her daughter were left needing to know more about sexual matters because her daughter doesn't want to talk about it.  | Daughter felt she was not left needing to know more about sexual matters when being told things. Mother feels her daughter has not been left wondering about the facts concerning SRE matters, but if she was unsure about something then she would just ask.                                      | SRE taught to adolescents | Children are dissatisfied with the SRE provided at school as it does not teach them all they need to know.                          | Quality of SRE  |
| Would prefer to be taught about sexual facts from school, because they do not ask anything personal. Mother would prefer for her daughter to be taught about sexual matters from young people that go into the school, such as sexual health workers.                                       | Daughter prefers to be taught about sexual matters from his mother and from school. Mother thinks that ultimately parents should discuss SRE matters with their children and then for further education to be given by school. Parents should then reinforce this information with their children. | SRE taught to adolescents | Children should receive SRE at school and then this be reinforced at home where possible.   | Formal SRE, embarrassment associated with discussing sexual matters and invasion of privacy |
| Daughter feels that she picks up  | Feels she learns things from listening to  | SRE taught to             | Learns from   | SRE and friends   |

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| information from listening other people's conversations.   | other people's conversations.   | adolescents               | listening to other peoples conversations.   |   |
| Daughter talks to her best friends and boyfriend about sex just to get a better understanding. Does not get embarrassed and feels she can trust his friends. Mother knows that her daughter discusses sexual matters with her friends and boyfriends, but just not sure what they discuss. | Daughter discusses sexual matters with his friends, but does not learn anything. It is just talking to them because she trusts them and that they are going through the same things as her. Mother feels that her daughter talk to his friends about boys, relationships, periods, etc. | SRE taught to adolescents | Children talk to their friends because they can relate to one another.                                    | SRE and friends                               |
| Daughter discussed SRE matters with her friends, but will not discuss things with either of her parents. Mother feels that her daughter will discuss things with their friends that they would not discuss with her.   | There are no SRE matters that she would discuss with her friends and not her mother. Mother feels that her daughter may discuss things with her friends and not her, but that doesn't bother her as she knows her daughter will talk to her if she needs to.                            | SRE taught to adolescents | Children talk to their friends about things they may not discuss with their parents.                      | SRE and friends                               |
| Does not think that she learns things from his friends because they all know the same information, but talks to them to get a better understanding. Mother feels that her daughter will discuss things with her friends to try and understand what each other at going through.            | Daughter thinks that by talking to her friends she just finds out what they are experiencing. Mother thinks her daughter will discuss sexual matters with his friends to try and understand what adolescence is like for each of them.  | SRE taught to adolescents | Children talk to their friends to get a better understanding of their experiences.                        | SRE and friends                               |
| Mother given a period talk with other girls in secondary school and the whole class were given one session on sex education, but nothing learnt through it being so funny.   | Mother got taught the basics about puberty and the facts on reproduction in biology class.  | SRE taught to parents     | As previously found parents were given poor SRE, which did not provide the with the SRE knowledge needed. | Quality of SRE and lack of parental knowledge |
| The mother's parents did not talk  | The mother's parents did not talk about   | SRE taught to             | Due to religion   | Effects of                                    |

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| to her about sex at all, mainly through embarrassment and with them being Catholics.   | sex at all simply because they were embarrassed to discuss it with her or her brother.   | parents               | and embarrassment factors the subject of 'sex' was not discussed.   | religion and embarrassment associated with discussing sexual matters                   |
| The mother's parents did not comment on the SRE they received, but knew her parents did not have any and know her grandparents would not have discussed sexual matters with her parents. | The mothers parents did not comment on the SRE they received, but assumes they would have been given poor sex education.   | SRE taught to parents | Lack of sex education for parent's parents prevented SRE conversations to occur.  | Lack of parental knowledge and historical family context                               |
| Mother learnt most SRE from her two friends and other people's conversations.  | The mother learnt most about sexual matters from her friends when she was younger and then from colleagues as she has got older.                                   | SRE taught to parents | Parents learnt SRE through their friends and other peoples conversations.   | SRE and friends and historical family context  |
| Mother learnt about sexual matters from about the age of 13 years  | The mother was taught about sexual matters at school from the age of 12 years old.   | SRE taught to parents | Learnt about SRE matters later when attending a Catholic school.  | Effects of religion, Quality of SRE and historical family context                      |
| Looking back the mother felt she did not know all there was to know about sexual matters but would ask her older friend if she was unsure about anything.                                | Looking back the mother feel she did not know enough SRE but just accepted the information she was told because you were not permitted to question.                | SRE taught to parents | If parents were not taught the facts from school and home how were they suppose to make informed choices over their sexual behaviour? | SRE provided at school and sexual experiences/ awareness of the opposite sex           |
| Learnt about SRE matters from friends, magazines and her own sexual experiences that occurred at an early age.   | The mother felt she learnt about SRE matters from listening to other people's conversations, but feels this happens more now because sex is discussed more openly. | SRE taught to parents | Parents learn through experience and other people when discussing SRE topics openly.  | SRE and friends, sexual experiences/ awareness of the opposite sex and SRE as the norm |



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| The mother felt she had adequate knowledge when she was about 16 years old, but feels she continues to learn more about different things due to her age and the close relationship she has with her partner.                | The mother felt she had adequate knowledge when she was about 24 years old after she has the experience of a relationship.  | SRE taught to parents                            | Parents learn about sexual matters later in life when they had the sexual experiences.  | Quality of SRE given, lack of parental knowledge and sexual experiences, awareness of the opposite sex |
| Sex education could have been improved if the school had provided more than two sessions and did not make the topic of sex such a bad thing. Needed more information but without the dictation of what was right and wrong. | The mother feels that the SRE she was taught when younger could have been improved if more topics had been covered, which were more informative like today's teaching.                              | SRE taught to parents                            | Parents want better SRE for their own children as they have first hand experience of how negatively it affected them not knowing SRE facts. | Quality of SRE given   |
| Mother would have preferred for sexual matters to be discussed openly within the family, but blames her mother's strict Catholic views for it not being discussed.  | Mother would have preferred for sexual matters to be discussed more openly within the family when she was younger.  | SRE taught to parents                            | Parents want to break the cycle of SRE not being discussed openly within the family.  | Historical family context and SRE as the norm  |
| Mother does not feel that the lack of sex education impacts on what she tells her daughter, but feels she has had no role model to give her experience of the best ways to discuss sexual matters with her daughter.        | Mother does not feel that the lack of sex education she had impacts on how open she is with her daughter. If anything it has encouraged her to talk to her daughter so she knows more than she did. | SRE taught to parents                            | Parents are far more open with their children than their parents were when they were younger.   | SRE as the norm and societal changes   |
| Mother knows only what SRE her daughter has told her that she had. School do not indicate what they are teaching and when.  | Mother does not know what SRE has been taught to her daughter, except for what her daughter has told her.   | SRE taught to parents                            | Parents have not been told of the formal SRE taught to their children.  | Schools inform parents   |
| Daughter does not discuss sexual matters with either parent. Mother feels that her daughter talks to her friends the most about SRE matters because of choosing   | Daughter mainly talks to her mum about sexual matters because she has a close and trusting relationship with her mum. Mother feels that her daughter talks to her mainly about sexual matters.      | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Children will talk to the parent they feel most comfortable with, but more  | Positive communications and gendered experiences   |

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| friends that are like you so they understand more.   |   |  | so if the parent is of the same-sex.   |   |
| Daughter does not learn about sexual matters from her parents because they don't talk about it. Mother feels her daughter would talk to her rather than her father because he lives in America.  | Daughter talks to his mum about sexual matters overall mainly because they are of the both sex. Mother feels that her daughter will discuss things with her rather than her father because she is at home when the father is working, plus the mother and daughter share a close and trusting relationship. | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Children are more likely to discuss sexual matters with the parent they are closest to and the one that is there the most. | Positive communications and absence of father           |
| Daughter feels that her mother is likely to try and initiate SRE conversations, but the daughter chooses not to discuss it. Mother feels that when sexual matters have been discussed she has mainly initiated the conversations.  | Daughter thinks that both she and her mother initiate the conversations regarding SRE matters. Mother feels that she and her daughter both initiate the conversations regarding SRE matters.  | Parental communication & SRE with their children | If families are close parents and children will initiate SRE conversations.  | Positive communications                                 |
| Daughter would not discuss anything regarding sex with her parents. Mother does not think there are any topics that she wouldn't discuss with her daughter, but he daughter chooses not to discuss sexual matters with her and instead talks to her friends and boyfriend. | Daughter discusses all aspects of sexual matters with her mother. Mother would discuss any SRE topics with her children.  | Parental communication & SRE with their children | If both parents and their children are willing to discuss sexual matters SRE conversations occur.                          | Positive communications                                 |
| Daughter does get embarrassed when discussing sexual matters with her parents because the information is private. Mother does not get embarrassed when discussing sexual matters with her daughter gets embarrassed talking to her.  | Daughter does not get embarrassed when discussing sexual matters with her mother. Mother does not get embarrassed discussing SRE matters with her daughter.   | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Sexual matters can be embarrassing to discuss if parents and their children are not close.                                 | Embarrassment associated with discussing sexual matters |
| Daughter thinks school and friends teach her the most about sexual matters. Mother thinks her Daughter will learn from friends about sexual matters from school  | Daughter thinks her friends and school would teach her about SRE if she did not learn from her mother. Mother thinks that her daughter would learn the most about SRE matters from school and   | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Children would rely on friends and school to teach them about sexual   | SRE and school and SRE and friends                      |

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| and friends.   | friends if she did not discuss SRE topics with her daughter.  |  | matters if their parents didn't.   |   |
| Daughter feels that her mother has the knowledge to teach her about sexual matters, but feels sick talking to her about it. Mother feels she has the knowledge to teach her daughter about sexual matters.   | Daughter feels that her mother has the most up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach her about SRE matters. Mother feels she has the knowledge to discuss all aspects of SRE with her daughter.  | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Children perceive their mothers to have the up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach them about sexual matters.                   | Parental knowledge  |
| No restrictions on discussing SRE matters. No restrictions on discussing SRE matters.  | Younger brother can sometimes restrict SRE conversation to occur.   | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Younger siblings restrict SRE conversations.   | Human restrictions  |
| Daughter feels that her family does talk openly about sexual matters, but would do if it was up to her mother. Mother feels that her family does not talk openly about sexual matters because of her daughters choosing.   | Daughter feels that she talks openly about SRE matters with her mother, but not with other members of the family. Mother feels that her family talks openly about SRE matters.  | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Parents and children who are willing to discuss sexual matters do discuss these openly within the family.                  | SRE as the norm   |
| Daughter does not know how other families discuss SRE matters. Mother feels that all families are different based on the closeness between parents and their children.   | Daughter thinks that other families discuss SRE matters like hers does. Mother feels that some families are not as open as hers when discussing sexual matters.   | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Parents who perceive their family to be close and open when discussing sexual matters is different to how it was for them. | Historical family context, SRE as the norm and societal changes |
| Daughter does not feel that more sex education is given to girls or aimed at girls more than it is to boys. Mother does not feel that more sex education is given to girls than boys, but the topics are steered more towards the female body and their experiences. | Daughter feels that equal sex education is given to both boys and girls, but girls are warned more about why not to have sex. Mother feels sex education is steered towards girls more, but both boys and girls are given the same sex education. | Parental communication & SRE with their children | More SRE is aimed at the female perspective.   | Formal SRE  |
| Daughter does not know what age her parents want her to know about sexual matters. Mother  | Daughter feels her mother would want her to know about sexual matters before the school gives the formal sex  | Parental communication & SRE with their          | Parents want better sex education for  | Quality of SRE given and historical family                      |

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| wants her daughters to be learning about sexual matters when she is at an age to understand what she is being told.   | education. Mother would want her daughter to know about sexual matters before puberty aspects occur, but at a time when she is most likely to understand., which vary for each individual child.   | children   | their children than they received.  | context  |
| Daughter feels her parents are not involved in the SRE that is delivered at secondary school, but did when at primary school. Mother does not feel that the school involves her in the sex education her daughter receives.   | Daughter feels her mother is not involved in the SRE that is delivered at school. Mother feels she is not involved in the SRE that is given to her daughter at school.   | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Schools are required to involve parents in the SRE the SRE that they deliver.   | Schools to inform parents  |
| Daughter does not want her parents to more involved in the sex education that is provided at school. Mother would like to know more about what is taught and when it is to occur because she feels she may be in a better position to ask questions based on what he has been taught. | Daughter would prefer for her parents to be told more about what is taught to her at school. Mother would prefer to be told by the school what is being taught and when it is being taught instead of her daughter having to tell her. Would like to be more informed. | Parental communication & SRE with their children | Parents would like to know more about what is taught to their child so they can be prepared for sexual matters to be discussed. | Schools to inform parents and wishes of parents and their children |
| Daughters use television, the Internet and magazines to learn about SRE matters. Mother feels her Daughter uses TV, magazines and the Internet to learn about SRE matters.  | Daughter feels that she learns about SRE matters from magazines, in particular the problem pages. Mother feels her daughter will learn about SRE matters from television and magazines.  | Media impact on SRE within the family            | What aspects of SRE are children learning from these sources?   | Media influence  |
| Learns about what it is like for other people. Mother feels that the media are quite explicit in the messages they portray, but at the same time they a very informative in other ways.   | Daughter feels that by reading magazines she finds out what other people are experiencing. Mother feels that her daughter will learn about relationships, pregnancy, contraception and other sexual matters from these sources.  | Media impact on SRE within the family            | Are children learning about sexual matters from the media that they are not getting taught elsewhere?                           | Contribution of media sources                                      |
| Prefers to use media sources to learn about sexual matters because you can find out about things you want to know more about. Mother thinks that her Daughter prefers to find out   | Prefers to learn about SRE matters by talking to her mother, school and reading magazines. Mother does not know if her daughter prefers to use these sources to learn about SRE matters, but does not feel they will teach her much more than                          | Media impact on SRE within the family            | Children use the media to add to the SRE they already have.   | Contribution of media sources                                      |

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| sexual matters for herself.  | she already knows through the discussions they have had as mother and daughter.   |                                       |   |  |
| Thinks the media has an impact when showing you what you don't want for yourself, but still feels this does not stop people doing what they want to do. Mother thinks that the media has a huge impact over what her Daughters learns. | Daughter thinks that the media has a big impact over the SRE he learns, especially about keeping yourself safe. Mother thinks that the media has a massive impact over the SRE that her Daughter knows about.   | Media impact on SRE within the family | Parents think that the media have a massive impact over what sexual matters their children learn. | Contribution of media sources.   |
| Thinks the media does not act as a deterrent. Mother thinks that the media can act as a deterrent, especially when showing consequences of pregnancy.  | Thinks the media can act as a deterrent but they should not use scare tactics to stop people from making mistakes, but instead educate them to make their own choices as to why they shouldn't do something. Mother thinks that the media can sometimes act as a deterrent, but feels that it very much depends on the person as to how much of an influence the messages may have. | Media impact on SRE within the family | Parents think that the media can act as a deterrent.  | Positive/negative effects of the media   |
| Daughter feels she can relate to the information given in the media, especially about splitting up with boyfriends. Mother thinks her Daughter will relate to the thinks that he see in the media.                                     | Daughter feels that she can relate to something's in the media about boys, but then can not relate to other things that the media show. Mother thinks that her daughter will be able relate to what she sees and hears in the media.  | Media impact on SRE within the family | Children feel they can relate to things in the media which helps them learn more.                 | Media influences   |
| Daughter thinks that the media helps her learn what it is like from the male perspective. Mother thinks that her Daughter learns about the opposite sex from the media.  | Daughter thinks that the media helps her learn about the opposite sex. Mother thinks that the media helps young people learn about what it is like for the opposite sex.  | Media impact on SRE within the family | The media helps children learn about the opposite sex.  | Contribution of media sources and sexual experiences/awareness of the opposite sex |
| Daughter does not feel more confident with the knowledge she learns from media sources. Mother does not think that her Daughter feels more confident when using media sources to learn about SRE matters.                              | Daughter thinks that from the information she learns through the media that it does make her more confident. Mother thinks that her daughter and everybody become more confident from what they learn.  | Media impact on SRE within the family | Does knowledge increase confidence?   | Contribution of media sources  |

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| Thinks the media is a good thing because it teaches you Things that you don't want to ask people about, but a bad think in that it shows you what you don't want to happen to you Mother thinks the media can be a good thing in that it can generate reinforce negative and positive sexual issues, but feels this is very much dependent upon the child's knowledge. | Thinks the media can be a good thing because it gives information which some people don't necessarily want to talk about. Mother thinks the media can be a good thing in the amount of information they get across to people, but a bad thing if people do not have the basic knowledge and understanding. | Media impact on SRE within the family  | Parents think the media can be a good thing if children have the basic knowledge to understand the messages that are disseminated. | Positive/negative effects of the media |
| Daughter feels that religion influences the SRE people receive, but it doesn't bother her because she is not part of it. Mother thinks religion influences the SRE that parents give to their children and that this can be a bad thing.   | Daughter does not think religion influences the SRE that she receives. Mother not sure as to the impact of religion over the SRE taught because she is not religious.  | Impact of religion on discussing SRE within the family   | Children do not believe in religion even though one of the daughters comes from a Catholic family.                                 | Unimportance of religion               |
| <b>Impact of the Sense CD</b>  |  |  |  |  |
| Daughter thought the CD was good. Mother thought the CD was good and very informative.   | Daughter thought the CD was good. Mother thought the CD was good.  | All family members thought that the multimedia program was good and informative.   |  |  |
| Daughter liked the way it was colourful. Mother thought the best thing about the CD was the buzzwords because it reinforced correct terminology.   | Daughter liked the <i>'True and false'</i> section because it challenged you to see what you know. Mother thought the CD was very good when covering consequences and communication.   | Family members liked various aspects of the multimedia program especially the aspects that were challenging and informative.                           |  |  |
| Both did not dislike anything in particular.   | Both did not dislike anything in particular, but the fly started to become annoying.   | Once again the <i>'fly'</i> started to become an annoying feature.   |  |  |
| Daughter thought the CD would be good for young people of 13 to 14 years. Mother thought that the CD suited young people from the age of 11 upwards.   | Daughter thought CD would be good for young people her aged between 14 to 16. Mother thought sections of the CD would be good for children as young as 14 or 15.   | There were varying opinions of the age the multimedia program was most suited for but it ranged from 11 to 16 years of age.                            |  |  |
| Daughter would feel uncomfortable watching aspects of the CD as a family, especially about the things concerning girls.  | Would not feel uncomfortable watching the CD as a family. Mother did not think she would feel uncomfortable discussing any aspect of the CD with her daughter.   | Children would feel uncomfortable watching the multimedia program with their parents where sexual matters were not discussed openly within the family. |  |  |

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| Mother would not feel uncomfortable watching the CD as a family, but feels her daughter would get embarrassed.   |   |  |
| Daughter has not discussed all aspects of the CD with her mum, but doesn't want to. Mother thinks that there a lot of things on the CD that they have not discussed.   | No aspects of the CD that she has not discussed with her mother. Mother not sure of all aspects of the CD, but knows she and her daughter have not discussed emergency contraception in great detail because there has never been a need.   | The multimedia program raised topics that had not been discussed within the family.  |
| Would prefer to use the CD to learn about SRE matters rather than talk to her parents.   | Would prefer to talk to her mother rather than use the CD to learn about sexual matters.  | In families where sexual matters are discussed children preferred to talk to their mother rather than use the multimedia program to learn about sexual matters.                  |
| Daughter thought the CD would be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family. Mother thought the CD would be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family.  | Daughter thought the CD would not be useful when discussing sexual matters within his family. Mother thought the CD would be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family, but also useful if it was at school.  | It was thought that the multimedia program would be useful in generating sexual conversations within the family and that the resource should be made available within schools.   |
| Daughter feels that the CD would not be useful in encouraging her to talk to her mother. Mother did not feel that the CD helped in that she did not learn everything there was to do with sex and STIs to discuss it more with her Daughter if her daughter wanted to discuss it with her. | Daughter feels that the CD would not be useful in improving SRE communications with her family because she already talks openly to her mother. Mother feels that the CD would be useful in improving SRE communications within families, but not in hers as they can talk openly about all SRE matters. | The multimedia program was found to not have an effect over how the families discussed sexual matters.   |
| Daughter thought that the CD was good in that it wasn't too adult like. Mother thought the CD was good and hoped her daughter watched it because she would not watch it with her and will not talk to her about sexual matters.  | Daughter thought the CD was good in that it was very informative and covered aspects of sex education that have not been taught at school. Mother thought the CD was good.  | As before, all family members thought the multimedia programme was good and informative.   |
| Daughter liked the way the CD was interesting. Mother thought the amount of choice on the CD was good.   | Daughter liked the <i>'True and false'</i> section. Mother liked how the CD put different slants on relationships in the amount of information given about each type.   | The multimedia program was liked due to the variety of sections, how it discussed relationships and how the resource challenged children in the <i>'True and False'</i> section. |

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| Daughter liked all aspects of the CD. Mother liked all aspects of the CD.  | Daughter liked all aspects of the CD. Mother liked all aspects of the CD, but all the modern noises were annoying at time, but very modern and sure young people will like them.   | The multimedia program was liked by all, except one of the mothers who found the noises to be annoying.  |
| Daughter thought the CD was good for young people aged between 13 upwards. Mother thought the CD was good for young people aged 11 upwards, but some parts on puberty could be useful for late primary school age. | Daughter thought the CD would be good for aged 14-15 onwards. Mother thought the CD was good for young people from the age 14 years old.   | As previously stated there were varying opinions of the age the multimedia program was most suited for but it ranged from 11 to 16 years of age.                   |
| The Daughter would feel uncomfortable watching the CD with her parents, especially the female stuff and relationships. The mother thinks her daughter would feel uncomfortable watching the CD as a family.        | Would not feel uncomfortable watching the CD with her family, especially with her mother. Mother would not feel uncomfortable watching the CD with her daughter.   | As before children would feel uncomfortable watching the multimedia program with their parents where sexual matters were not discussed openly within the family.   |
| Daughter has not discussed many if any of the aspects with her parents that were raised in the CD. The mother had not discussed sexual fantasies and masturbation.   | Daughter feels that on reflection contraception has not been discussed in great detail simply because it is not needed at this time in her life. Mother thought that the only thing they hadn't discussed was emergency contraception, but they now have after watching the CD together.             | In families where sexual matters were discussed openly it was found that topics were raised that had not been discussed before after using the multimedia program. |
| Daughter would prefer to use the CD to find out about sexual matters rather than talk to her parents. Mother thought the CD covered a lot of aspects that they have not discussed, unfortunately.                  | Would prefer to talk to her mother every time, rather than use the CD to learn about SRE matters. Mother thought the CD would be good in generating conversations within the family, especially if the CD was sent from schools to encourage parents to talk to their children about sexual matters. | In families where sexual matters are discussed children preferred to talk to their mother rather than use the multimedia program to learn about sexual matters.    |
| Daughters thought the CD would be good when discussing sexual matters within the family, just not in hers. Mother felt that the CD would be good in increasing   | Daughter thought the CD would be good when discussing sexual matters within some families, but just not for her because she has been taught pretty much everything, but did think the CD would   | The multimedia program was found to not have an effect over how the families discussed sexual matters.   |



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| sexual communications within the family if the children want to discuss it with their parents, and visa-versa. | help with her younger brother when he gets a little bit older. Mother thought the CD was good for other families to discuss SRE topics, but not hers. |  |
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## **APPENDIX 15**

### **Field Notes Taken for Families 1-10 (Including pilot study)**

The following field notes were taken throughout collecting the data for the first ten families (families 1 – 10).

## **1<sup>st</sup> Pilot Study**

**Page 6** – Female parent thinks her children should know about sex by about the age of ten, but thought the topic area of ‘sex’ should be discussed from a much younger age.

**Thought that came from this statement** – When asking parents in general ‘*at what age do they want their children to know about sex?*’ they mainly say about ten years or older. However, they are okay to talk about sexual development and things associated with sex earlier than this, only if their child asks general questions or if the parent sees bodily changes that may need discussing. Therefore, it seems the focus is on the word SEX – maybe because once children know about it they become curious and ask parents more questions, which they one may feel uncomfortable discussing or two, may not know the answer to the question being asked by their children (feelings of inadequacy as parents are normally meant to know more than their children, or thought to know more than their children). Is it then that the word SEX and SEX EDUCATION which is more of an issue for parents, rather than their child not wanting to discuss issues associated with sexual matters?

**Page 6** - The daughter also insinuated that ‘*girls want to know about sex earlier than boys*’ – possible reasons why? Both the daughter and son who participated in Study 1 also commented on the reasons behind why the Sense CD and how similar tools are useful and preferred by young people when finding out facts associated with sex. They stated that the CD was a good way to find out the facts without being embarrassed. Although, is this embarrassment due to not knowing something, embarrassment of discussing a topic or embarrassment of what might get asked when a topic is being discussed? Children are reluctant to discuss matters, which they regard as personal, or private to them.

**Thought that came from the overall interview:** It was apparent that the family (especially the mother) were close to each other and felt at ease to discuss many aspects of SRE in the family context. However, on reflection it would be important to explore parent’s knowledge as this may provide a barrier for not discussing sexual matters with their children. Although parent’s knowledge was not a factor in the family of the pilot study, religion did impact upon how the father was taught and therefore an additional category was included to explore the impact this has on sexual matters being discussed within the family.

Any additional questions that were asked and extended upon for Study I can be seen in Appendix 5. However, to allow the reader to follow the progression of how theory developed the inclusion of these questions will be highlighted as memos are provided.

## **1<sup>st</sup> Family Interview**

**Page 1** – Female parent refers to talking openly as a family about sex ... At a time that is right for their daughter. However does the mother really mean sex is discussed openly at a time which is right for her as a parent? This also relates to a point made

above in that parents leave the topic of sex to be discussed at a time that is right for them. This message could be reinforced when considering how the mother felt that her daughter may know more about sex than she does being a parent.

**Page 2** – Mother thinks discussing sexual matters is embarrassing to discuss. This was mainly how it was taught to her and her husband when they were younger.

**Page 2** – Father – Maybe homosexual? Why? Reluctant to discuss certain sexual topics with his daughter. Does this link in with the aspect of not understanding why a male and female can not just be good friends without the label of boyfriend/ girlfriend?

**Page 2** – Father commented on male/ female friendships and how they are more common than when he was younger – refers to it more as a gender split. In response to this the daughter comments on how it is important to get a males point of view on things.

**Thought that came from this statement** - Do young males and females become friends so they can find out more about each specific gender? Allows them to find out what each other are going through and therefore because there is more awareness of each genders situation, possible more likely to be sympathetic to each others feelings and therefore not discuss things behind each other back – daughter insinuated this on page 2-3 of the transcript.

**Page 3** – Young people, in particular girls want to know as much as possible about sex when they start to spend more time with boys and other young people of varying ages.

**Thought that came from this** - Maybe look at older people as an example of what is going to happen to them throughout puberty - Reassurance.

**Page 3** – Father thinks the media have a massive influence over changing attitudes. However, it has now become a '*free for all*' in that it is everywhere, but with little emphasis being placed on the consequences of sexual behaviour. Parents think that this comes from also the music channels on television and the way celebrities where less clothes, which are seductive – not pornographic, just very seductive.

**Page 4** – Daughter thought that the multimedia program would be good as a reference point to learn about facts. Parents thought that the multimedia program was okay however, it could have been improved by showing more of the consequences associated with sex. Family felt they had discussed most things that they had explored on the multimedia program.

**Page 5** – Daughter talks to friends about sexual matters to get information from their perspective However, talks to parents to clarify facts and get the correct information.

**Thought that came from the overall interview** – Daughter and parents did seem to have a close relationship and did not pose any embarrassment when asking questions,

which does suggest that they do, and have discussed sexual matters openly previously – This was also reinforced by the family who believe they do talk openly about sexual matters, even though this was not the same for parents when they were growing up.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Family Interview**

**Page 1** – Son indicated that he would not ask SRE questions to people if they were old (i.e. grandma or grandpa).

**Thought that came from this** - Do young people feel that older people do not know enough or are not in tune with what young people are experiencing due to being from a different generation? Could this be due to how society has changed over the years and the perception that older people do not know what it is like for the younger generation (i.e. from their perspective)?

**Page 1 and 2** – Mother does not object to her son looking at naked images of women in magazines and indicates that pornography can be a way they learn about sex from a male's perspective.

**Thought that came from this** - With the mother being the only female in the family she may not know what young males need to know sexually? Therefore, if the son asks his mother she will be able to answer the questions based on what he needs to know rather than on what she thinks he wants to know. Possibly?

**Page 3** – Son agrees to using female magazines to learn about sex and gets an idea of female views and perspectives from his mothers' newspaper and magazines. Mother does not object to him looking at magazines of naked women and is happy for her son to read the problem pages in her magazines, which would normally be read by teenage girls. Is this curiosity to try and find out about the problems and feelings that girls have?

**Page 2** – Do boys see sex based on the images they see, without looking at sex as being in a relationship where feelings are discussed? Son claims to learn about the opposite sex by reading problem pages in his mum's magazines.

**Page 2** – Son would mainly talk to his mum about sexual matters, but then laugh about sex and the opposite sex with his friends who make a joke of it.

**Page 3 and 4** - Son indicated that as well as not discussing SRE topics with older people, he also would not ask questions to his elders who were not understanding about his feelings. Mother and son both agree that the father in the family is older, but is also not understanding to his son's needs or situation. This is perhaps why the son would not talk to his father regarding sexual matters whilst he was growing up. What is too old? Children want people to be sensitive and understanding about what they as individuals are going through.

**Page 3** – Son would not ask his father questions because he thinks he is *'thick and insensitive plus, what would he know he is only a butcher'*. Could the fathers lack of knowledge be due to how he was taught about sex when he was younger (i.e. sex was not taught much at school and was not openly discussed within his family at home) or is it that the father is working away five days a week and not there to be asked questions when his son comes home from school?

**Thought that came from this** - Does the father not talk to his son because he was not given sex education, therefore may have a poor account of sex except for what he has experienced? Or is it perhaps the father and son do not have the bond of a father/ son relationship with the father working away and therefore not with his family for 5 days of the week?

**Page 4** – The son asks his mother questions about sex because she has the knowledge being a nurse. These conversations take place when his two younger brothers have gone to bed.

A further notion that could try and bond an explanation regarding who young people want to talk to about sex could be the adults occupation (i.e. Butcher – thick (dad) and Nurse – knows about the body (mum). However, could it be that that young people want to talk to older females because they are sensitive, caring and will discuss things more than possibly males would?

**Page 4** – When watching the multimedia program the mother reinforces positive messages about sex (i.e. condom use), but refers to them being used by using other people, so not to encourage her son to have sex. This relates to the point made directly above in that the mother will discuss more sexual topics and put it in a way that shows she cares.

**Page 5** – Difference in terminology – The term *'Gay'* is referred to in different ways in this generation as apposed to meaning homosexual when the sons mother and father were younger. Could this also force a bigger conversation gap between father and son? Could it be that young people are more accepting of people who are homosexual due to the way they way that the labelling term of the word gay not being used. Using this term can make the topic less of an issue and therefore less judgemental and stigmatising towards peoples sexuality.

**Page 5** – If son was unsure about something he would do a Google search on the Internet to find out more. However, the question remains ... what information is he accessing (e.g. pornography) and what doe she learn from the sites on the Internet?

**Page 5** – Son thought the multimedia program was good and enjoyed the different sections, especially those that were challenging (i.e. the quiz). Mother though the multimedia programme was good, but should be used in collaboration with schools. Mother and son asked if the CD could be left for a further week as they did not have chance to explore all sections due to time commitments.

**Page 6** – Mother believes that her husband does not necessarily discuss sexual matters with their children because he has never been taught about sex from his own parents – no schema.

**Page 6** – Mother asks questions about sex to her son in a way that illustrates she respects his opinion by being keen to hear what he has to say, but also asks questions to clarify what he knows and that she understands him. This reinforces that point made above and how the son will talk more to his mother because she shows she respects and cares for him.

**Thought that came from the overall interview** – Mother and son seemed to have a close relationship. However, time may be an issue for discussing sexual matters as mother is looking after three sons, has a full-time job and does not have the support of the father as he works away and is only present in the family two days a week. Furthermore as mentioned previously the mother may not have the information to give advice from a male perspective. This could pose a problem in that her son may not be getting the information he needs especially because he can't/ won't talk to his father about sexual matters.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Family Interview**

**Page 1** – It is perceived that the daughter is shy when answering questions as she continually put her head down especially as she was aware that her mother was watching her as she answered the questions. This consequently led to the daughter giving socially desirable answers.

**Page 1** – Daughter indicated that she doesn't necessarily talk to her mother about sexual matters. It was only when her mother glared at her that she hesitated and changed her answer to stating '*I don't know really*'. This is referred to later in the interview (page 2) when she verbally states she prefers to '*be taught at school, not at home*'. A possible reason for this could be that her mother came across as rather authoritarian and had quite firm beliefs. These beliefs appeared to stem from the way she was taught SRE, especially coming from a Catholic family.

**Page 2** – Mother learnt a lot about SRE through talking to her mother and older sisters. Her father was not included in these conversations.

**Page 2 and 3** – Mother thinks SRE lessons focus more on the biological aspects and does not cover enough about relationships, peer pressure, etc. This indicates that the mother is not really aware of what her daughter has been taught, especially as evidence from the demographic questionnaire completed by the daughter illustrates she has been taught about the aspects mentioned by the mother along with many others. This further indicates and supports the daughter's view that she and her mother do not discuss sexual matters.

**Page 3** – Daughter gets embarrassed talking about sex. She doesn't know why but she demonstrated shyness throughout the interview when her mother was looking at her, or asking questions out-right. At first it was questioned by the research as to whether the daughter actually wanted to take part in the interview, and then it became clear that she was not comfortable talking about sexual matters in the presence of her mother, which is illustrated in the points to follow.

**Page 3** – Mother seems to put a lot of emphasis on the consequences associated with sex (i.e. pregnancy). Mother claims to have talked about contraception when it has come up on television, but daughter gets embarrassed. There was also an element of the mother giving the most socially desirable answers, which were not based on how the family actually communicate sexual matters.

**Page 3** – If the daughter has ever mentioned anything to her mother about sex in the past the mother automatically thinks she is pregnant, otherwise why would she be asking. Once again this comes across as quite critical and un-supportive and not very trusting towards the daughter. Could this also be why the daughter doesn't talk to her mother about sexual matters if this is the way she responds?

**Page 3 and 4** – Mother thinks that her daughter doesn't discuss, or want to discuss sex because she is not in a relationship with someone, and thinks she is definitely not in a sexual relationship. This could be perceived as quite a critical remark at the daughters age, especially if the daughter wants a boyfriend or is under pressure from peers to go out with someone.

**Page 4 and 5** – Daughter uses magazines to learn about sex, but remembered she had not put that on the questionnaire – this was amended. She also reported learning a lot from watching television.

**Page 5** – Mother refers to young people needing to know about sex at the right developmental time. What is the right time? This research has illustrated that the right time to teach sexual matters is possibly dependent upon religion; is associated with parental embarrassment; poor sex education of parents and parental up-bringing. It also demonstrates that what the mother perceives as the right time for her daughter to know about sexual matters may not be ideal for the daughter as sex is discussed more openly and at a younger age than it was for that of the mother.

**Page 7** - Follow-up interview confirms that the daughter gets embarrassed when people ask her or try to discuss her personal feelings, especially regarding sex and relationships, which are private – Invasion of privacy.

**Page 7** - Even though the mother was brought up as a Roman Catholic and just got told to 'SAY NO' and not to have sex until marriage, she states that she encourages openness of SRE conversations – could the Catholic religion be becoming laxer, or is she keen to ensure her daughter does not feel guilty and represses her feelings when having a sexual relationship? Mother wants her children to have the values and morals



associated with sex, but not to be brought up with the shame that was put on sexual relationships when she was younger.

**Page 8** – Mother feels religion is not a big behavioural factor for young people, like it was for her and generations before.

**Page 8 and 9** - Daughter liked the CD as it gave her options on how to deal with other situations, not just to do with sex. Daughter also thought that the multimedia program was good in that it allows you to learn at your own pace, based on your existing knowledge. Mother agreed with this but thought the CD should be used in collaboration with schools.

**Page 9** – Mother learnt things from the CD (i.e. that young people could access contraception and get advice even if they were under the legal age of before having sex) even though she was a nurse. However, because she would not have been taught things about contraception with coming from a Catholic family, this may be the same with her children, especially as she feels her daughter is not in a sexual relationship and therefore does not need the information.

**Thought that came from the overall interview** – At the beginning of the interview the daughter indicated how she did not talk openly to her mother about sexual matters. However, after watching the CD she claimed she would talk to her mother about aspects on the CD if the mother had watched the '*Sex and Relationship*' section with her that was on the CD. The mother did not do this even though she previously stated the importance of not just teaching the biological and educating young people with sexual aspects which gives a wider breadth of knowledge. This seems a contradiction in terms on the mothers' part.

Although the mother indicated throughout the interview that she and her daughter discuss sexual matters, the daughter indicated the opposite. However, there are a few areas of concern in why the daughter swayed in her answer. Either:

1. The daughter does talk to her mother about sexual matters but was too overcome with embarrassment at the beginning of the interview, which is why she said she didn't;
2. Coming to the time when the researcher is about to leave, the daughter may have got into trouble if she had not painted the ideal family picture, but instead made her mother look bad.

At this stage the latter is likely since the mother seemed strict, bossy, controlling and insensitive to her daughter's feelings. For example on page 6, the mother gave private details of her daughter splitting up with her boyfriend a short time ago. At the daughter's age this will be quite upsetting however, the mother offered this information without any probing. This begs the question of how many other people has the mother discussed her daughters broken relationship with and why would the daughter tell her mother things that she knows are going to be repeated and as a consequence could

possibly leave the daughter feeling many negative things about herself – lack of trust between mother and daughter.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> Family Interview**

**Page 1** - Mother talked about babies to her daughter when she was at the age of 3-4 years of age when she was pregnant with her second child. Does discussing sexual matters from a young age provide a comfortable platform for sexual matters to be discussed within the home? If so do these conversations allow for a trusting close relationship to develop between parents and their children?

**Page 1** – Daughters asks her mother questions based on the things she has heard in order to get the correct information.

**Page 2** – Mother and daughter are very close to each other and do discuss all topics relating to SRE.

**Page 3** – Daughter gets embarrassed talking about sexual matters when she does not know something. Do young people get embarrassed at the fear of feeling stupid for not knowing something? Is this only in relation to SRE? Possibly not – nobody likes to feel inadequate or stupid, regardless of age.

**Page 3 and 4** - The mother talked to her own mother about SRE topics and maybe sees this as the norm, so she has followed this role model with her daughter (i.e. always try to model our parents and eventually know more or have better than our parents shows how successful we are at being parents). However, this could be related to other aspects of life (i.e. career, having more material things, etc).

**Page 4** – Daughter thinks her father gets embarrassed talking to her about sex. Is this just due to the fact that he is not at home as much with working away and therefore a contrast is made between how much she talks to her mother as opposed to her father?

**Page 4** – Daughter feels her and her mother talk about sex more because of how close they are. She knows that some of her friends who are not close to their mums hardly even talk to each other about sex, especially not the way she and her mum do.

**Page 4** – Mother feels her husband may get embarrassed talking about sexual matters because he did not get told anything either with being brought up as a Roman Catholic. Mother also thinks that because her husband works away a lot he is not there to answer questions raised by their children, plus he will not know how to respond because he won't have the knowledge of knowing what they already know.

**Page 4 and 5** – Mother thought that her parents did not like talking about sex because they didn't know all the information needed to do so. This research has shown good indication that if parents have poor sexual knowledge through lack of sex education then this is likely to affect the next generation until the cycle is broken.

**Page 5** – Problem pages help young people in that it gives them the opportunity to think how they would cope or manage particular situations. By reading about the negative consequences in magazines, does this act as a deterrent and a protective factor with young people?

**Page 7** - Need to make SRE more fun – it would be good if they could use this CD.

**Page 7** – Mother feels that parents might not always know the facts to teach their children about sexual matters. However, if parents knew when, and what SRE was taught at school parents could be more prepared for any questions that their children may need the answers to.

**Page 7** - The topic of ‘Sex’ may not be taught any different to when parents were younger compared to today younger generation. This is a general finding over many of the interviews.

**Page 8** – Parents may not have the knowledge to teach their children about SRE based on the poor SRE they received, or may not be able to remember the sexual information as they learn it so long ago – parental age affect SRE conversations?

**Thought that came from the overall interview** - You could tell that the mother and daughter were very close by the way they looked at each other and it was obvious that they really do love and respect one another. Through this closeness there were no barriers for discussing sexual matters. However, the additional questions asked from interview 1 and 2 seemed a fruitful one regarding religion of parents. It would seem that parents from Catholic families did not receive effective SRE that covers aspects of contraception and other taboo topics. It was furthermore important to identify the formal SRE of parents in order to understand how they learnt about sexual matters and whether they felt their knowledge was lacking to teach their children about sexual matters. It seemed apparent from interviews 3 and 4 that parents did not know enough about certain aspects of SRE (i.e. contraception). It was also evident that by not knowing enough about sexual matters lead to embarrassment by parents and their children. However, children got embarrassed discussing the act, especially if they did not know the slang terms. Questions to incorporate these aspects were included in subsequent interviews as a means of exploring the barriers and facilitators further for sexual matters not being discussed openly within the family.

## **5<sup>th</sup> Family Interview**

**Page 1** – The son felt weird and embarrassed talking to his mother about sex and feels he could only talk to a male about it, in particular his uncle or older cousin who he is close to. Would not also talk to his mother about sex because she doesn’t know what it is like from his perspective with her being a female. This poses the question of whether there is an impact of parental closeness in that even though the son in interview 5 did

not have a father at home he still would not prefer to talk to his mother about sexual matters – where is he going to learn the most about SRE?.

**Page 2** – The son would prefer a school teacher to teach SRE as it does not focus on just him to answer questions, but instead the whole group. This highlights that children want to learn about sexual matters but do not want to be singled out encase they are asked questions they may not know the answers to, which could then lead to embarrassment.

**Page 2** – The mother was never taught SRE from her parents as she was brought up a strict Roman Catholic environment, hence why she also wasn't taught much SRE at school except to 'SAY NO'. The mother learnt the most about sex from her friends and life experiences.

**Page 2** - The mother and her son live with her mother (son's grand-mother), which stops the mother and son talking about SRE matters. Mother and son only watch television programmes that contain sex when she is out. If any sexual content was to be shown of television when the grand-mother was present it would just get turned over without any discussion. Is the mother reinforcing negativity concerning sex and potentially guilt that may be experienced by her son.

**Page 2** – Mother agrees that she is more likely to tell her son something rather than talk about a particular subject. She just tells him information and does not give details to help highlight his knowledge or understanding of a topic area – mother is controlling and bossy, but is this a protective quality?

**Page 3** – Mother listened in on other peoples conversations to learn more about puberty and sexual matters because she was not taught this at school, or at home.

**Page 3** – Son does not get embarrassed watching programmes with sexual content in front of his mother, but does get embarrassed when she asks him personal questions about his personal experiences and feelings – invasion of privacy.

**Page 3** – Mother is not informed of what SRE is taught to her son at the Catholic school he attends.

**Page 4** – Mother still sees her son as a little boy at the age of 12 years old. Thinks that her son just talks about football with his friends and that he does not discuss sex because he does not find it an interesting topic, especially since he doesn't have a girlfriend. Mother is quite protective and controlling with the way she talks over her son when he is asked a question – she answers questions for him. Is this encase he does not give socially desirable answers?

**Page 4** – Mother believes that due to the poor sex education she received when she was younger accounted for her not knowing about sexual matters until she was in her late

teens. However, she thinks that most of this knowledge came from listening to other people's conversations to understand more about sexual matters.

**Page 4** – Mother and son talk to each other when they spend time sharing similar activities (i.e. sports) – supports research in that the more time parents and their children spend together sharing interests the closer they are and more conversations occur (find refs for write-up of introduction).

**Page 4** – Television increases sexual conversations between mother and son. This supports previous research in this area and more importantly highlights that the same can be said for this research in that shared computer usage increases parent/ child conversations and encourages sexual communications.

**Page 4** – Son believes he does not learn anything about matters associated with SRE by watching television. Even though the son may believe this to be true, psychologically he will be picking points up at an unconscious level, adding to the knowledge he already has.

**Page 5** - Son prefers to use computers to learn about sex, as they do not pose any embarrassment of questions being asked, which are personal to his gender and age.

**Page 5 and 6** – Mother believes the religious upbringing she had lead to her having little knowledge of sexual matters until an older age. This has still not prevented her from addressing her religion with regards to the sex education her sons receives, instead believes that she will educate him from about the age of 12, and not before. Mother believes teaching SRE before this time encourages experimentation. However, mother not aware of the sex education her son receives at school or how it may have changed since she was at school.

**Page 6** – Mother thinks the multimedia is a good way of learning about sexual matters and feels it should be used in collaboration with schools.

**Page 7** – Parents make assumptions on the amount of information they think their children know. However, this has shown to be inaccurate in this present research especially since many parents are not aware of what sex education has been taught their children.

**Page 7 - 8** – Son has to ask for magazines to be bought for him, by his mother. He only asks for sports magazines like his mother would expect him to. However, his mother is aware that he (regardless of religion and age) will look at other magazines to learn about sexual matters. This is reinforced by the comments in family in that mothers are aware that their male offspring may use pornographic material to learn about sexual matters.

**A thought from this statement** - Is that mothers in general are happy for their sons to view and read pornographic magazines as it may give the young males the information

they want without having to ask mothers directly about what females may experience? Why else would it be okay for pornographic material to be read in the early teens of males? Possibly saves on the embarrassment of parents? Maybe pornographic material is not necessarily sex education, but instead provides fantasy images of the opposite sex, which could lead to the identity of what they find attractive in a sexual mate.

**Page 7 and 8** – Mother claims to have not been told of the SRE her son receives. She now knows that he has been told more than she thought and feels she would have talked to her son about sexual matters more if she had known what had been taught at school. This begs the question that due to lack of school/ parent communication barriers could be formed, especially since parents are not given the opportunity to raise sensitive topics with their children when they are taught at school.

**Page 8** – Mother and son both liked the CD (mother especially liked the buzzword) however, the son would still prefer to use the CD to learn about sexual matters, much to his mothers dismay! Mother thought she and her son were very close and talked about most things. Although the son also thinks they are close there are just certain things he really didn't want to talk about to his mother. However, at the follow-up interview he changed his view and said that he would use the CD and talk to his mum to learn about sexual matters – This is a contradiction in term, compared to his view a week ago, that had no probing (i.e. has his mother told him what to say at the follow-up meeting to indicate that they talk about sexual matters, which is more the ideal of what the norm should be?).

**Thought that came from the overall interview** – It was apparent that the mother did not necessarily talk to her son about sexual matters. However, she felt that this could be more to do with her telling him things rather than him asking her questions which would lead to having a sexual conversation. The mother felt that the school did teach SRE, but she is not aware of what is taught and it would seem the son knows a lot more SRE than she thinks. He may have learnt this from his cousin or uncle, but the mother does not pursue what her son knows so she can elaborate on his knowledge and understanding of sexual matters. This may mirror the way SRE was taught to her and it maybe that she would not feel comfortable talking to her son.

## **6<sup>th</sup> Family Interview**

**Page 1** – The two daughters felt they had learnt mostly about sexual matters at school. However, the eldest daughter would talk to her mother about things that she had been told about.

**Page 2** – Sisters claim to talk to each other about sexual matters that they have learnt about, especially puberty factors with them both being of similar age.

**Page 2** – Mother and daughters feel sexual matters are discussed openly within the family with it mainly being all girls in the house (father does not live with them). Daughters were dissuaded from talking about sexual matters with their father as he just

embarrasses them by telling them to keep away from the opposite sex and because he doesn't understand how they feel, being girls. This reinforces that girls will talk more to females as they understand their particular gendered experiences and needs.

**Page 2** – Mother claims to be nosy and asks her daughters questions that are personal, which leads to embarrassment and possible reluctance in the future for discussing sexual matters – invasion of privacy.

**Page 3** – Eldest daughter prefers to talk to her friends as they are experiencing the same types of things. Could these conversations provide reassurance and the feeling of not being alone when making the change from a child to an adult?

**Page 4** – Restrictions within the family are caused by a younger sibling being present, therefore sexual matters are not discussed as openly in the family as the mother would wish for.

**Page 4 and 5** – Mother and her daughters use the Internet if they want to find out more about sexual matters – Contribution of media sources.

**Page 5** – The family did not feel religion impacted upon their family discussions regarding sex, as they were not religious, nor did the mother have a religious upbringing. Could this explain the openness of sexual matters being discussed within the family?

**Page 6 and 7** – Mother and daughters felt the multimedia program would be useful at increasing sexual communications within families. This is mainly as it gives the facts, but adds additional information that you may not have thought about asking about (i.e. questions asked at the virtual clinic).

**Thought that came from the overall interview** – It would seem that, as with other interviews to date, young people get embarrassed talking about sexual matters. This is especially so if the information is of a personal nature or based on an area they don't know much about. Mother and daughters did appear comfortable whilst taking part in the interview, therefore suggesting sexual matters were discussed openly within the family. However, additional questions relating to the restriction for discussing sexual matters will be explored in further interviews to identify how parents and their children overcome these barriers.

## **7<sup>th</sup> Family Interview**

**Page 1** – The son feels that he has been given SRE at school but prefers to talk to his mum about sexual matters as he knows he can trust her not to say anything, which is personal to him – Mother and son seem to have a close relationship. These conversations are increased more because the son spends more time with his mother than with his father. This suggests as before that if the father is not present mothers will take on the responsibility to educate her children about sexual matters.

**Page 2** – Even though the mother was brought-up in a Catholic environment she had open sexual communications with her mother when she was younger. She also learnt from her older sisters – learnt how to deal with different situations from these conversations. Sometimes listening to other people’s conversation was how she learnt so much about sexual matters.

**Page 3** – Mother feels that not enough SRE is given to her son at the Catholic school he attends. She feels the school reinforce her morals and beliefs, but feels that her son should be given all SRE, (e.g. contraception, STIs, etc) regardless of religious beliefs.

**Page 3** – Mother not told of SRE being taught to her son, but sexual discussions have occurred from a young age so they have the familiarity of discussing sexual matters, regardless of the SRE that the school deliver.

**Page 4** – Only restrictions are when other people are in the house. However, with the mother and son living on their own sexual matters are discussed just when they are alone.

**Page 5** – The openness of discussing sexual matters when the mother when growing up was duplicated with her own son. Even though the mother feels not enough SRE is covered at school, at the right time, she ensures her son learns about the consequences of sex along with all SRE matters from her and the conversations they have.

**Page 5 and 6** – Although the son understands in god and the Catholic ethos, he classes himself as an individual and not a follower of those at school. He does not necessarily practise the Catholic religion and his mum does not make him follow it either. Does this suggest that religion is not such a great factor for young people as it once was, especially as parents are now not making their children follow a strict religious upbringing like they once had?

**Page 7** – Young people prefer to have mixed-sex classes as it allows them to learn about the opposite sex. However, girls are given an extra SRE lesson that boys are not included in – son disagrees with this.

**Page 7 and 8** – Mother and son thought that the multimedia program was good in that it allowed to son to learn more based on the knowledge he had. The mother also thought that the multimedia program should be incorporated into schools and should be part of the SRE curriculum.

**Page 9** – The multimedia program was not necessarily useful in increasing sexual communications within the family as these already exist. However, it did provide a basis for further in-depth communications about contraception, the act, etc.

**Thought that came from the overall interview** – It was apparent that the mother and her son had a close and trust relationship, which provided a comfortable environment for sexual matters to be discussed from a young age of the son. The main thing that



came from the interview was that with regards to religion in that the son did not feel pressured into practising any faith. Mother and son knew of the consequences attached to religion and made sure these were not a barrier for discussing sexual matters openly within the family.

## **8<sup>th</sup> Family Interview**

**Page 1 and 2** – The son and daughter both claim to receiving SRE at the Catholic school they attend. However, the daughter did not know what contraception was at the age of 13. The daughter prefers to talk to her mum about sexual matters, whereas the son prefers to talk to both of his parents (father lives in the family home and was taught about sexual matters from his own mother) about sexual matters. The reason for this is that he can get the information from a male and female perspective however; his he talks to his father more about things that happen to them as males. This suggests and reinforces previous findings of gendered specific information being a preferred source for adolescents.

**Page 2** – Although the son and daughter do not get embarrassed talking to their parents about sexual matters, they do get embarrassed if they do not know some of the facts, that their peers may know.

**Page 3** – Talking to friends about sexual matters does not necessarily educate young people. It is more to provide reassurance of what each gender are going through and the experiences that they have. This confirms previous findings.

**Page 3 and 4** – Father is more inclined to talk about sexual matters with his children based on the open sexual conversations he had with his own mother. The female parent did not have sexual communications at home when she was younger due to the strict Catholic beliefs of her family. She therefore finds it sometimes difficult to answer some questions as she does not have a schema and feels she is still learning about sexual matters even now as an adult and mother.

**Page 5** – Parents and their children were found to initiate sexual conversations with each other. These were heightened by media influences and the things that they had been told at school, which they did not understand.

**Page 5** – It was felt that younger siblings and outside visitors (other children) could restrict sexual communications within the family. However, parents and their children would overcome these restrictions by revisiting the personal conversation when they were alone at a later time (e.g. bedtime).

**Page 6** – Although the mother was brought up in a strict Catholic environment she will not allow for religion to affect the way her children are taught and the SRE they receive. The mother and father want their children to have better SRE than they had as it is more important than religion. If parents do not see their religion as important this could impact on their children to not see religion as an important aspect of their lives.

The father furthermore believes that religion is not as important to young people of today as it was for them when they were younger.

**Page 6 and 7** – Parents do not see religion as important when it impacts upon the education their children receive, especially as parents want things to be better for their own children, than it was for them.

**Page 7** – Son remarked on how the multimedia program would be a valuable resource for any age as children will learn based on their existing knowledge.

**Page 9** – Son and daughter prefer to be taught in mixed-sex classes at school as this allows them to learn more about each others gender, which in turns helps young people be more understanding of what it is like for each other.

**Page 9** – Mother provides a nurturing role to he children in that she does so much for them. Could this explain why children sometimes feel closer to the person who does the most for them and the one who spends the most time with their children?

**Thought that came from the overall interview** – Although it appeared that parents did talk to their children about sexual matters the mother felt that sometimes she does not always have the necessary facts to give her children the advice they require. If she is unsure of something she would then ask her husband who seemed to be well informed of the facts concerning sexual matters. This poses a concern in that she does not have all the knowledge needed to teach her children and that if she was not married she would have even less knowledge to give her children advice. Therefore, does dual parenting really affect SRE communications within the family? Furthermore, if children perceive their parents to not know the necessary facts does this deter them from going to their parents to find out more about sexual matters?

## **9<sup>th</sup> Family Interview**

**Page 1** – The son prefers to talk to his mother about sexual matters because she will talk in a serious manner and tell him the truth. She will also not tell anyone what they discuss and offers a greater understanding of the topic being discussed. Does this suggest that children will talk more with their mothers because they are serious and not making a joke of personal things as fathers would?

**Page 1 and 2** – Son can talk to his dad about sexual matters but he is either at work or watching football. If father shared this activity and did more with his son would this encourage fatherly/ son conversations?

**Page 2** – Mother has talked to her son from a young age about sexual matters. Does this provide a safe environment for SRE conversations? Father has also talked to his son but more about the consequences of sexual behaviours and issues associated with sexual matters.

**Page 2** – Family have a humorous relationship and often make jokes associated with sexual matters. However, the son knows where the boundaries are and the time when sex is serious and not a laughing manner. Do people bring humour into talking about sexual matters as a way of diverting embarrassment? Mainly between fathers and sons?

**Page 2** – Mother asks son about general things associated with sex, but does not probe into his private life. Does asking questions in general allow for anything and everything to be discussed?

**Page 2** – As in previous interviews the school do not always explain things associated with sexual matters well. This acts as a facilitator for children to ask parents more. However, it also causes potential problems as well if parents and their children do not discuss sexual matters openly within the family or if parents do not have the sexual knowledge to educate their children.

**Page 2 and 3** – Son prefers parents to teach him about sex as school teach it so seriously and therefore you dare not ask questions, but at home time is taken to explain more so the son understands the information that has been given.

**Page 3** – Although the son will joke about bums, things he sees and hears with his friends he will talk on more of a serious note with his parents.

**Page 4** – Parents were given very little formal SRE at school when they were younger, especially the mother who went to a Catholic school. However, sexual matters were also not discussed at home either not just for the mother with her being brought-up in a strict religious family but, also this was also the same for the father, even though he was not religious. The main reason for the father was that his parents didn't have time with having ten children to look after. Does more children in the family act as a barrier for sexual matters being discussed openly? This relates to family 2 and family 8 where lots of children were in the family home. Plus with other previous findings having siblings who were younger could also prevent SRE conversations to occur within the family.

**Page 4** – Although the parents felt sexual matters were not discussed with them when they were younger through embarrassment, parents were not seen as educators in those days and expected schools to teach all that was needed about sex and other topics. If this is true it presents further problems for Catholic families as many SRE topics would not be taught through the Catholic ethos within schools.

**Page 5** – In families it is important that parents provide a safe and comfortable environment for sexual matters to be discussed. However, parents deterred from asking their parents things about sex because they as children felt they knew more than their own parents. Is this a factor in this research in that if children see their parents as not having the sexual knowledge needed to answer questions then they will not ask, but go somewhere else to find the information (e.g. the Internet)?

**Page 5** – Sex treated as a joke because people were not educated enough to discuss it.

**Page 5 and 6** – Sex was seen as a disgusting word that related to pornography, which is why it was never discussed. As a consequence to this the father used pornographic magazines to learn more because it was not discussed openly within the family. Even the fathers in the olden days used pornographic magazines to learn about sex, which suggests that they never had the knowledge to teach their own children because they were still learning about sexual matters themselves.

**Page 6** – Parents still claim to be learning about sexual matters now or especially if not in their 30s.

**Page 6** – Mother feels that if SRE is delayed until the age of thirteen that this causes embarrassment and makes sex a topic for laughter. Talking about it from a younger age does not make it such a funny and embarrassing thing because children know what is going to happen to them before puberty aspect occur.

**Page 7** – Parents feel that because they have educated themselves about sexual matters, rather than relying on the poor SRE they received or information from their parents that they are better equipped to talk to their own children about sexual matters, especially with it being more openly discussed within the family. Is it then that parents who have not educated themselves about sexual matters can not, and do not feel comfortable discussing matters with their own children because they don't have the knowledge to do so?

**Page 8** – Parents want to know more about what, and when SRE is taught at school. Should not have to find this out from their children – responsibility of school? How are parents suppose to be prepared to talk to their children if they don't know what is being taught at school?

**Page 8** – Certain SRE topics father will not discuss with his children – Does this lead to more SRE conversations with mother – Gendered responsibility?

**Page 9** – Parents want their children to have better SRE than they did, not just from a sexual topic point of view, but about feelings, emotions and considerations towards personal relationships.

**Page 10** – Parents want their children to have the values and morals attached to the Catholic religion but will not push or make them be religious themselves, unless they want to be.

**Page 11** – Son felt that he had learnt a lot from the multimedia program that he would not have learnt from school. Parents approved of the resource as it covered a lot more about relationships, which is an important aspect of things associated with sexual matters.

**Thought that came from the overall interview** – A lot of the findings from this interview relate to previous ones. It was obvious that the family were open when talking about sexual matters, especially between mother and son. It would seem that mothers take the protective role and initiate sexual conversations to educate her children and fathers will talk about gender specific topics that relate to the male sex. However, mothers give greater explanations on sexual matters to help her children understand more.

## **10<sup>th</sup> Family Interview**

**Page 1** – The sons were not given any signposting from teachers about where to get further advice with them going to a Catholic family.

**Page 1 and 2** – The sons do not talk to their parents about sexual matters. They prefer to learn from school or someone they don't know as this saves on any embarrassment. The sons were embarrassed from the beginning of the interview and felt really uncomfortable taking part.

**Page 2** – Mother feels that the school have provided the SRE that her sons want to know about, but she is not aware of what is taught and what her sons know about.

**Page 2** – Sons talk to their friends in a joking way about girls.

**Page 3** – Parents were given poor SRE at school and it was not discussed at home. It was classed as embarrassing and the mother still gets embarrassed talking about it now. Could this be why the sons choose not to talk to their parents about SRE matters – perceive that they get embarrassed and maybe do not know the facts to teach them?

**Page 3** – Parents learn about sexual matters from their friends and think that this is the way their own children will learn about sexual matters.

**Page 4** – Father would use pornographic magazines to learn about sexual matters and these topics were then discussed with his friends.

**Page 4** – Parents claim to know about sexual matters, but do not know the correct terminology and up-to-date terms to educate their children. Could this be that because parents are not on the same wave length as their children and that this also deters children from talking to their parents? Could it be that children think they know more than their parents so they don't bother asking questions regarding sexual matters?

**Page 4** – Sons find it more embarrassing talking to their mother, than their father as she is of a different gender and because she gets embarrassed when discussing sexual matters. Could this embarrassment be concerned with not knowing enough SRE to teach her children about sexual matters or is it associated with mother being brought-up in a Catholic environment?

**Page 5** – Sons are embarrassed talking to their mother because if she does ask questions they are of a personal nature and that is an invasion of their privacy.

**Page 5** – Father admits to not being involved in the SRE conversations in the family as him and his wife just sit in the background and listen to their children's conversations.

**Page 5** – Mother and father claim that they would talk to their children about sexual matters if they wanted to, but they feel that their children may know more about sexual matters than they do.

**Page 5** – The only restriction on discussing sexual matters would be the younger sibling.

**Page 6** – Sons think that the media give better SRE than at school. This is especially so as they are able to watch something and then form your own opinions based upon the sexual information given.

**Page 6** – Sons prefer to use media sources to learn about SRE because if you learn something you would not have to discuss it with anyone unless you choose to.

**Page 6** – Mother and father think that religion is based on a value system and not something that prevents sex education. Does this not conflict with government guidelines for teaching SRE? Sons do not share the same opinion as parents and feel that the Catholic religion do not talk about many sexual topics, but instead reinforce '*no sex before marriage*'.

**Thought that came from the overall interview** – There was a lot of repetition that came from this interview based on the findings from previous interviews. The one thing that is apparent is that young people do get embarrassed when talking to their parents if they are not of the same sex, and if the parents do not have the up-to-date knowledge to teach their children. It would also seem that based on many of the interviews in Study I, children were not being totally honest in the presence of their parents. Due to few new findings emerging it is important to identify issues surrounding embarrassment and whether if interviewed separately whether children would give more information on the barriers and facilitators for not discussing sexual matters openly within the family. Therefore, subsequent interviews in Study II will be carried out with parents and their children being interviewed separately.

## **APPENDIX 16**

### **Field Notes Taken for Families 11-20 (Including pilot studies)**

The following field notes were taken throughout collecting the data for the last ten families (families 11-20).

## **Second Pilot Study**

### **Daughter:**

**Page 2** – Female daughter mentions how it is not embarrassing to discuss sexual matters, but it is embarrassing when people ask questions about private aspects of her own life (this would be the same with adults). Is it not that parents should accept that their children have private thoughts and should therefore respect their privacy as they are growing-up – Invasion of privacy?

**Page 2** – Health professionals at school will know more about sexual matters because it is their job – is this indicating that parents will not know as much about sexual facts as it is not part of their occupation? If so, do parents who are health professionals talk more openly about sexual matters with their children?

**Page 2** – Children talk to friends about sexual matters so friends will reciprocate and then you more about what it is like for them – Not alone in what they are experiencing – Reassurance!

**Page 2 and 3** – Daughter talks to mum about sex because she spends more time with her and because she is of the same gender. Also feels more comfortable talking to her mum because with spending more time together they know each other well and know how each other feel. These conversations occur when sharing an activity (i.e. watching a television programme or cooking).

**Page 4** – Use media sources to learn more about how people cope with situations – media acts as a deterrent because it shows the things that you don't want to happen to you.

**Page 4** – Media makes SRE more the norm, which is a good thing as it allows people to form their own identity and steer how they want to be.

**Page 5** – Non-faith children tell Catholic school friends about the things that they are not taught in faith schools (e.g. contraception). Do Catholic children talk more to friends who are not religious to find out more? However, do these non-faith friends have the correct information to teach their peers?

### **Mother:**

**Page 5** - Sex was an embarrassing topic to discuss for parents, parents. However, now parents, parents are a lot more open even though they still don't know much about sexual matters. Do older people find sexual conversations embarrassing because they are unable to join in on the conversation with having a lack of knowledge? This supports findings from Study I in that lack of knowledge leads to embarrassment → embarrassment deters sexual conversations occurring. It would appear that the



increased conversations regarding sexual matters has educated even the older generation (i.e. parents and their parents).

**Page 6** – Sexual matters were not discussed in the olden days because nobody really knew anything about sexual matters – Why discuss a topic that nobody knows anything about and therefore can not contribute and become involved in what is being said?

**Page 6** – Attitudes changed towards sex because it was brought to the forefront in the media.

**Page 6** – Perception that sexual matters were not really important until you were in a relationship – parents, parents probably thought not to discuss sexual matters to their children in the olden days because it did not apply to them as they were not married, and not having sexual intercourse.

**Page 7** – Parents in the study talk about not having sufficient knowledge until late in their adult life (i.e. age 30). By this time they would have had the experiences of sex themselves to educate their children. Before this time they may have got embarrassed because of lack of knowledge. Therefore, experience will have educated rather than them having the knowledge to make informed choices for themselves.

**Page 7** – Parents were instilled with the fear of getting pregnant when they were younger – scare tactics! Is this why parents are keen to reinforce the consequences of sex with their own children hoping it will delay sexual intercourse? Possibly due to the only schema they have of sexual matters from when they were younger.

**Page 7** – The messages parents pass onto their children are based on the mistakes they made, and the experiences they had. Therefore, parents talk to their children based on their own experiences, which is not necessarily accurate for young people of today and because sexual experiences are personal. It therefore begs the question ... Is it that parents who pass on out-dated thoughts and messages detract away from their children talking to them because children feel parents do not know enough about sexual matters and because they can not relate to their generation.

**Page 8** – Mother believes that it is good to learn from lots of people to get the facts and find out as much information as possible.

**Page 9** – If parents don't push their children into talking about sexual matters, does this allow young people to talk more with their parents as they perceive parents are not going to pry into their personal lives, but instead talk about things that are raised by their children? If children are forced to give information or feel embarrassed talking to their parents, does this delay or act as a barrier for future SRE conversations?

**Page 10** – Parents do not want to go into school and be involved in the SRE given to their children, but they would like to know when, and what is being taught so they are prepared and also aware of the information their child receives – this may stop parents

asking questions that seem probing and personal, which will either reduce or stop SRE matters being discussed openly within the family.

Page 10 – Mother thinks more documentaries should be shown, which compliment the messages given in the media. The media do not necessarily show the consequences associated with sex, which children need to know about and possibly prevent them from making mistakes.

**Thought that came from the overall interview** – The pilot study demonstrated that participants understood the questions being asked. The only thing that needs to be changed is that parents and their children watch, and answer the questions based on the multimedia program separately. The researcher could sense that the daughter was not as open with her mother present and her body language was different to when being interviewed where more personal questions were asked. Therefore, unless the families have a strong desire and stipulate that they want to watch the multimedia program together, the interview process will be totally separate for parents and their children.

## **11<sup>th</sup> Family Interview**

### **Sons:**

**Page 2** – Do children want young people to teach them about SRE topics because they are of the same generation, and are likely to know more about sexual matters than that of parents?

**Page 2** – Young people appear to get taught SRE by much older people. Young people don't seem to be able to relate to older people having sex, especially when visually seeing an old woman with wrinkly hands putting a condom on a demonstrator. Why do young people feel like this? Possibly think that older people do not have the knowledge and understanding of what sexual feelings adolescents from this generation are experiencing. This was heightened by feeling they had their granny was teaching them about sex.

**Page 1** – Young people in this generation seem to be a lot more open between the genders and want to know more about what the opposite sex are experiencing in the transition of childhood through to adulthood.

**Page 2** – Young people who claim to not talk to their parents about sex prefer to learn about sexual matters in an activity based setting (i.e. youth club) where the emphasis is not on specifically talking about sex or where they are singled out to answer questions, which they may not want to discuss or know the answers to.

**Page 2** – Teachers do not give sign-posting to adolescents of where to go to learn more about sex and get advice, instead sexual-health workers have to be invited into the school for adolescents to get this information.

**Page 2** – Young people get embarrassed when people probe into their private lives.

**Page 2** – Males perceive females to have been the ones at school who have taught them the most about sexual matters – does this reinforce that SRE matters should be taught by the female sex (at home, and at school)?

**Page 2** – Older male teacher gets embarrassed teaching SRE – since the male teacher was embarrassed, does this indicate that he does not have the knowledge and skills to teach effective SRE? Furthermore, is it that teachers may teach SRE because they have to, and not because they want to?

**Page 3** – Children want someone to teach them about sexual matters that is young, knowledgeable and not embarrassed. Someone who is not going to make a joke of it but will teach it from the perspective of young people.

**Page 3** – Children will be deterred from discussing sexual matters with their children if they feel that their parents do not have the SRE knowledge. Do children feel they know more SRE than their parents? If so, what is the point of children asking their parents?

**Page 5** – Need to be giving the SRE facts that are relevant to particular ages based on the things they are experiencing – no need to show a child-birth video at the age of 11 – Need to give the information that is age specific based on what things young people want to know more about. Why don't schools ask young people about the information they want to be told more about and take it from there (e.g. ask it basket)?

**Page 5** – Children do not see themselves as religious even though they have Catholic parents and whereby they attend a Catholic school. This emphasises that religion is not an important aspect of life, especially if it prevents sexual facts being given.

**Mother:**

**Page 7** – Not given SRE that relates to humans, only the development of animals. People were expected to piece the facts together.

**Page 7** – Mother was only told where sanitary towels were from her mother and this was all that was discussed relating to sexual matters as she was too embarrassed.

**Page 7** – SRE was an embarrassing topic and was taught in a joking manner at school when parents were younger. Could this be why parents who are embarrassed or who do not have the knowledge to discuss SRE topics with their children treat sex as a joke?

**Page 8** – Mother only really knew about SRE topics when she had had sex, and after having her first child at the age of 35. This reinforces previous findings in that experience educates parents rather than parents being given the information and having the knowledge to make informed choices for themselves.

**Page 8** – Because STD's and gays were rare when parents were younger, does this prevent them from discussing these topics with their children? This is mainly from the point of view of knowledge, but also discussing certain topics as the norm when associated with sexual matters.

**Page 8** – Mother thinks her children are embarrassed when discussing sexual matters with her, where children think that it is the parents who are embarrassed to discuss sexual matters.

**Page 8** – Parents think that their children joke about SRE matters with their friends because they are embarrassed to discuss personal matters. If parents think this why do they themselves ask their children probing questions about their private lives, especially if it is going to lead to embarrassment?

**Page 9** – Mother gets embarrassed talking about sexual matters because that was the way sex was taught was taught to her.

**Page 9** – Mother thinks her sons prefer to learn about sexual matters from their friends as they have a strong rapport and because they are all experiencing the same things, and come from the same generation.

**Page 10** – Father never around to discuss sexual matters with his sons and does not encourage father/ son times together as he prefers to do his own thing (i.e. play golf with his own friends). If parents do not spend time with their children, this prohibits a close bonding relationship to develop and consequently personal and sexual matters will not be discussed.

**Page 10** – Mother would get embarrassed discussing masturbation and oral sex with her sons. Could this be due to her not experiencing these things herself and because she was not taught about these sexual aspects when she was younger?

**Page 11** – Young people are not interested in religion and knowing this parents don't push their religious beliefs onto their sons, but they would like them to have the values and morals that relate to the Catholic religion.

**Thought that came from the overall interview** – It was obvious that parents and their children did not discuss sexual matters within the family. The mother thought that this was so because her sons were embarrassed although in contrast it was the parents who were embarrassed when discussing sexual matters based on how they were taught. Sons identified with this and embarrassment was found as a barrier for parents and their sons to not discussing sexual matters openly within the family.

## 12<sup>th</sup> Family Interview

### Daughter:

**Page 1** – If parents and their children have a close relationship they both ask questions and talk a lot more. This was illustrated in earlier interviews (families 1, 2, 3, 8 and 9).

**Page 1** – Talks to mum because they have a close relationship and because she trusts her.

**Page 2** – Talks to friends as they share the same experiences with being of the same gender.

**Page 3** – Parents may not have the up-to-date SRE knowledge because it is not part of their job. Is it that where SRE matters are the occupation of parents (mainly mother) that sexual matters are discussed more openly within the family?

**Page 3** - Restrictions of young siblings, but then daughter will just talk to her mother when brother gone to bed.

**Page 3** – Daughter would like mother to know more about what SRE she is taught at school. This would allow the mother to raise SRE conversations to tell her things she has experienced or knows about.

### Mother:

**Page 5** – Mother thinks that her father was embarrassed talking about SRE matters because it was not his role. Is it that mothers should teach daughters and fathers should teach sons? It would appear so as this is how her and her husband plan to teach their children.

**Page 8** – Mother and daughter discuss sexual matters when sharing an activity (mainly watching television or cooking). This was found to be the same for other families in study I.

**Page 9** – If schools were to tell parents when they were teaching SRE, this would provide reassurance and allow for parents to ask questions in general, rather than asking personal questions to their children, which could prevent future SRE conversations through embarrassment associated with asking probing questions.

**Page 10** – Parents don't mind the sexual messages disseminated through the media. However, they need to place morals and values SRE matters so young people know what is right, and what is wrong. Do the media promote sexual behaviour making it acceptable or are they doing in a way that shocks young people, but gives them the information to make informed choices? This would be fine as long as young people have somewhere to go to discuss what they have seen to improve upon their understanding. Young people learn different things from the media based upon their previous knowledge, experiences and correct facts that are instilled through the family.

**Thought that came from the overall interview** – It was apparent that the mother and daughter were close and that they discussed sexual matters. Sexual conversations mainly occurred because they had a close and trusting relationship, which had developed over the years of discussing sexual matters (i.e. young age). The only thing that acted as a barrier for discussing sexual matters openly was younger sibling however, this barrier was overcome by talking when he had gone to bed.

### **13<sup>th</sup> Family Interview**

#### **Son:**

**Page 1** – Prefers to talk to friends to learn about SRE matters.

**Page 1** – Talks to mother because he is closer to her and spends more time with her.

**Page 2** – Prefers young people to teach him from the Sex Education Roadshow because they know what they are talking about and because they openly talk about SRE matters. Is this because it is their job and therefore do not find sex an embarrassing subject to discuss?

**Page 2** – Embarrassed talking to older people who are not from his generation. Does this include parents?

**Page 2** – Feels '*safe with friends*' because they are from the same generation and are going through the same things. Not able to relate to parents/ teachers? Teachers/parents not able to relate to young people?

**Page 2 and 3** – Talks to mother when she is alone. Is it difficult to get time alone with mother when other siblings are present, especially younger ones?

#### **Parents:**

**Page 4** – Parents were not given SRE by own parents so they learnt from school, friends and magazines. In the olden days, was it that only pornographic magazines talked about sex?

**Page 5** – Embarrassing to discuss SRE within the family when parents were younger.

**Page 5** – Parents learnt from older siblings and cousins – How would parents without older siblings or cousins learn about sex at the time? Did they miss out? If yes, does this contribute to the varying levels of SRE knowledge of different parents?

**Page 5** – Parents do not feel they know everything about sexual matters, even as an adult.

**Page 5 and 6** – Seeing sexual messages discussed in the media allows for sexual conversations to occur.

**Page 6** – Parents have no idea what SRE is taught to their son at school. It is only when he tells them what he has been taught that they find out. This is the same for many parents in Study I and Study II in that parents do not know what SRE is taught and when, which prevents them from approaching their children to discuss sexual matters without seeming like they are invading their privacy.

**Page 8** – It is expected that boys will talk to their friends about sexual matters, especially girls. What is the obsession with boys wanting to know more about what it is like for girls? Is it because there is a lot of suspense about what girls are experiencing, especially as their developmental changes are more obvious to see (e.g. breast growth, developing/ changing figures, etc)?

**Page 8 and 9** – Mother would tell her daughter more about sexual matters at a younger age than she has talked to her son. Why should there be any difference? Mainly talk to daughter sooner because of them experiencing puberty changes earlier (i.e. periods).

**Page 9** – Parents claim to sound old when talking to their son about sexual matters. Does this support earlier findings in that their son finds it hard to relate to them because parents do not know what it is like for the son's generation?

**Thought that came from the overall interview** – The son does not appear to get embarrassed discussing sexual matters with his parents, and visa-versa. However, parents claim to have an older perspective on SRE topics and therefore their son talks to his peers to learn more, as well as using the Internet. The mother claims to have told her son about sexual matters but will speak to her daughter at a younger age due to her experiencing puberty sooner.

## **14<sup>th</sup> Family Interview**

**Son:**

**Page 1** – Parents talk to their children about SRE matters because they want them to feel safe and have better SRE knowledge that they had when they were younger.

**Page 1** – Not embarrassing for children to discuss sexual matters when it has been talked openly about from a young age.

**Page 1** – Parents appear knowledgeable to children, especially when they as parents have been taught about sexual matters from a young age.

**Page 1 and 2** – Mother gets embarrassed talking to her son as she cannot relate to the experiences of boys. Does this prevent mothers from discussing sexual matters with

their sons and if so boys do not get the same sexual information as girls with being of the opposite sex?

**Page 2** – Son talks to his father about anything and everything. This is mainly because they spend a lot of time together by sharing an activity (i.e. cycling).

**Page 3** – Father talked to his son about sexual matters from a young age because this is how his parents taught him. Does history repeat itself, especially as the father has a schema of how to discuss sexual matters as his parents openly talking about sexual matters with him from a young age?

**Page 3** – Talks to friends just to learn more about what it is like for them – Reassurance!

**Page 4** – Children who have a close relationship with their parents would not have answered the questions differently because they would know of everything that was said at the interview.

#### **Parents:**

**Page 4** – Parents received poor SRE at school and the mother did not get told about sexual matters from her parents as it was embarrassing for them – Could this lack of knowledge and lack of schema contribute to her being embarrassed talking to her own son? She claims 'yes'.

**Page 5** – Father had an open relationship with his own parents whereby SRE matters were discussed openly within the family from a young age. Does this SRE knowledge allow him to talk openly with his own son. He claims 'yes'. Fathers, father talked openly to him about sexual matters – Is there a pattern developing here? It would seem so!

**Page 7** – Parents do not know what SRE is taught to their son, unless he tells them. However, sexual conversations generally occur between father and son when they are alone, cycling.

**Page 7** – Even if poor SRE is given at school, mother and father have equipped him with the knowledge of safety, respect and being loving and caring in relationships. He has the morals and values to behave in a correct way.

**Page 7** – Son sought the facts from his father, but will get advice from his mother about the opposite sex. Do male children talk to their mothers mostly to get advice and steering of the opposite sex? Even if mothers do not know what it is like from the male perspective she would be able to give advice based on what females are like.

**Page 8** – Parents perceive that their son may get embarrassed talking about his personal relationships. Although the parents have talked openly about sexual matters with their



son (mainly the father) they respect his right to privacy and don't interfere. They as parents feel they have given him the knowledge to behave in a correct way and his relationships are private unless the son wishes to talk to them (his parents).

**Page 9** – Father tones down the fact that him and his son are talking about sexual matters by sharing a sporting activity – This taking the emphasis off the fact that they are talking about sex.

**Page 10** – Parents do not know what SRE is taught to their son. Therefore, they are sometimes not prepared to answer questions he may ask, especially the mother and therefore she becomes embarrassed. Not knowing something leads to embarrassment!

**Page 11** – Children are destined to '*fit-in*' to how teenagers behave and learn the '*norm*' through the media and by talking to his friends of the same age.

**Page 11** – Media sometimes conflicts with the morals and values parents try and teach their children. Sometimes the media make casual sex, gays, etc acceptable and therefore may steer young people in the wrong direction, if they are easily influenced or whereby they cannot talk to their parents to gain a better understanding of what they have seen.

**Thought that came from the overall interview** – Mother talks less to her son than his father does because she gets embarrassed and does not feel she knows enough about the experiences of boys. The father on the other hand has been told about sexual matters from a young age by his own parents and therefore finds it the norm when talking to his son. Father and son also spend a lot of time together when cycling and it was found that the majority of the sexual conversations take place when they are alone sharing an activity that they both enjoy.

## **15<sup>th</sup> Family Interview**

### **Sons:**

**Page 1** – Sons prefer mixed classes so they can find out more about the opposite sex, even if they do find it funny at times. If boys knew more about the opposite sex and there was less curiosity would they still joke about what is happening to girls?

**Page 1** – Catholic school provided web-sites, but did not encourage accessing them for young people to learn more about sexual matters.

**Page 1** – Young people wanted to know more about contraception and where to access it. Even though children and Catholic school and their parents are Catholic, children are not believers themselves. This supports previous finding that '*religion*' is not as important to young people.

**Page 1** – Being in a mixed class allows more questions to be asked that young people want the answers to, but probably would not dare ask themselves.

**Page 2** – Sons would like their dad to tell them things about what happens to the male sex. However, he is not present so they talk to their mum and find out '*boy information*' from their friends or other peoples conversations. Does not being able to talk to the same-sex parent about sexual matters mean that young people miss out on sexual information and therefore talk to their same-sex friends because that is the only way they find out the sexual information they need to know more about?

**Page 2 and 3** – Sons think their mother feels obliged to teach them about sexual matters because she is a single-parent, but also because she wants the best for them. Plus she is the one that is always there to talk to her sons.

**Page 3** – As in interview 2, Study I male children are more inclined to talk to their mother about sexual facts due to her occupation as a nurse and therefore perceive her to be knowledgeable in the area.

**Page 3** – Mother teaches her sons about STIs and contraception knowing that the Catholic school they attend will not cover these subjects.

**Page 4** – Mother is confident when discussing sexual matters with her sons. Does showing confidence indicate that the person knows what they are talking about? Shy, non-confident parents may deter their children from discussing sexual matters with them because the child may perceive their parents to not know enough to educate them about sexual matters.

**Page 5** – Media educate children about what it is like from the perspective of the opposite sex (i.e. boys learn more about what it is like for a female to have a baby).

**Page 5** – Young people feel more confident when they have the sexual knowledge as it allows them to understand why they behave in certain way and know the reasons for it.

#### **Mother:**

**Page 7** – Historically, boys have seen what happens to females (physically, developmentally and emotionally) as funny.

**Page 7** – Mothers father saw educating children about sex as the responsibility of the mother – History repeating itself!

**Page 7** – Certain sexual topics are still taboo (i.e. masturbation). Is this because masturbation could come under sexual gratification and that this is wrong from a young age – seen as pornography and dirty in the olden days.

**Page 7 and 8** – Religion strongly influenced parents talking to their children in the olden days. This is not necessarily the case now as parents have reflected upon how they were taught SRE matters ensuring that it is not going to be the same for their own children. This indicates that parents were '*dissatisfied*' with the sex education they received, which lead to embarrassment and mistakes to be made. Parents do not want their children to make the same mistakes they did and therefore attempt to provide better SRE by talking to their children about sexual matters – Big improvements!

**Page 9** – Talking about sexual matters from a young age '*curbs embarrassment*'.

**Page 9 and 10** – Knowing about sex allows young people to form their own identities and decide how they want to be as people.

**Page 13** – Sexual communications occur at teatime when families are together – shared activity!

**Page 13 and 14** – Because the mother does not get embarrassed talking about sexual matters, neither do her children.

**Page 14** – Parents can make the topic of sex difficult to communicate because they get embarrassed and do not discuss sexual matters openly.

**Page 14** – Children need to be prepared for what is going to happen to them as they change from a child to an adult – informed so they can make the right decision.

**Page 15** – Media make sex the '*norm*' showing that it is acceptable within society.

**Page 15** – More sexual knowledge leads to greater confidence, which leads to greater self-esteem.

**Thought that came from the overall interview** – Although sons attend a Catholic school they are not religious and do not believe in some of the strict rules encased in the Catholic religion (i.e. no sex before marriage, no use of contraception, etc). These beliefs have also not been reinforced by the mother who was brought up in a strict Catholic religion and who disagrees with how SRE is taught. However, she feels that Catholic schools reinforce good values and morals and she ensures her children know all that is to be known about sexual matters by educating them herself. Although the sons would like their father to tell them about boy things associated with sex, they rarely see him and therefore learn things from the male perspective by talking to friends. The sons also learn about sexual matters from a female perspective by talking to their mum and older sister.

## 16<sup>th</sup> Family Interview

### Daughter:

**Page 1** – SRE covered the main topics but this was rushed and more information could have been provided.

**Page 1** – With not being part of a faith school daughter was given information on contraception and where to access it.

**Page 1** – Daughter thinks that her mother talks to her about sexual matters so she is prepared and fearless of the changes that are to occur.

**Page 2 and 3** – Daughter prefers to talk to her mother about sexual matters because what they talk about remains private and this is heightened because they are of the same gender. This highlights that children do not like the things they say to be discussed or repeated – Privacy! Is this not the same for everybody, even adults?

**Page 2 and 3** – Although daughter does talk to her mother about sexual matters she also wants to talk to her friends so she gets the information from other peoples perspective who are from her generation.

**Page 3** – Daughter perceives her mother to be understanding, caring and knows what she is going through. Does being understanding and caring encourage and heighten SRE conversations between parents and their children?

**Page 3** – Daughter does not talk to her fathers about sexual matters because she perceives him as being old (in his 40s) and therefore not understanding like her mum is about the things that she is going through as a teenager. She also thinks her father would be embarrassed. This supports previous findings that suggest that the older the parent the less likely SRE conversations exist potentially due to lack of knowledge, understanding and having an appreciation from the young persons perspective.

**Page 3** – Media, mainly television generates sexual matters being discussed between mother and daughter (this does not include the father because he does not live in the same house).

**Page 4** – Younger sister restricts some SRE conversations, but mother and daughter talk when younger sibling is in bed.

**Page 4** – Daughter thinks that her friends do not talk to their fathers about sexual matters. Does this provide the norm for which parents children are most likely to talk to about sexual matters?

**Page 4** – Daughter thinks that boys do not get as much SRE as girls because fathers do not talk to their sons and mother are limited in the sexual conversations due to being of the opposite sex.

**Page 4** – Would prefer school to inform her mother of the SRE given so her mother can talk more about things and be prepared for SRE conversations that she has with her daughter. This would also allow parents to find out more about different topics so they can have a more in-depth conversation with their children when discussing aspects of sex that parents are not knowledgeable about (e.g. contraception, STIs, etc).

**Page 5** – Daughter feels she can relate to things she sees and learns from in the media. The more she learns, the more confident she feels not just because of the things she does, but by knowing the reasons for what she is doing.

**Mother:**

**Page 6** – Mothers parents did not talk to her about sex because of strict religious beliefs and because she feels they did not know enough to discuss sexual matters openly within the family.

**Page 7** – Mother learnt about sexual matters by participating in a sexual relationship. Does the Catholic religion, poor SRE, lack of sexual communications within the family encourage young people to have sex so they can learn more and curb the curiosity that is associated with sexual matters?

**Page 7** – Mother has always found out about things after the event – Fell pregnant/ learnt about sex, had a baby/ used contraception. Was this the case for other parents?

**Page 7 and 8** – Mother thinks she had un-planned children at a young age because she was unknowledgeable about sex. Does this just not stress how important it is for young people to be given effective SRE, so they can make informed choices over their behaviour?

**Page 8** – Mainly learnt about sexual matters by listening to other peoples conversations.

**Page 8** – Mother feels she is still learning about things associated with sex in her mid thirties. This was found to be the same for other parents in Study I and Study II. As parents are still learning things about sexual matters in their adulthood they maybe prevented from educating their children as they need, or would like them to.

**Page 8** – Parents always try to give their children the things they never got. Do parents in this research aim to ensure their children have better SRE than they received when younger?

**Page 9** – Societal influences – because society has changed so much and sex is far more openly discussed, this has encouraged parents to be a lot more open with their own children as sexual communications have become more the '*norm*'.

**Page 11** – Mother steers her children in the right direction more than fathers as they offer more advice and guidance in general. Is this true?

**Page 12** – If school equipped parents with the information of when, and what SRE was taught this may help as sexual conversations could be generated based on parents knowledge. Furthermore, it would not just be reliant on children telling their parents what SRE they had been taught. Could this be purposeful in encouraging parents to talk more with their children about sexual matters?

**Page 13** – Using many sources to learn about sex allows young people to get a bigger picture of all matters associated with sex.

**Thought that came from the overall interview** – The daughter mainly talks to her mother about sexual matters because she is understanding, caring and is not embarrassed to do so. Her father is opposite to this in his mannerisms and therefore this along with her perception of him being old would prevent her from talking to him about sexual matters. Although the mother did not have the knowledge from her childhood to teach her children about sexual matters with coming from a Catholic family, she has learnt about sexual matters through engaging in sexual intercourse and making mistakes when she was younger. The mother was determined to not let '*history repeat itself*' and therefore encourages sexual conversations with her eldest daughter, which take place when her younger daughter is not present.

## **17<sup>th</sup> Family Interview**

**Son:**

**Page 1** – Son received sex education in tutorial but it was rushed and did not get finished because of another topic intervening. SRE not as important as other topics?

**Page 1** – Son prefers to talk to his father about sexual matters. This mainly being because they are the same-sex. Gets embarrassed talking to his mother sometimes because she does not know what it is like for him – Father more understanding to his needs and male experiences.

**Page 1** – Father and son conversations are heightened by engaging in a shared activity (i.e. football). This has been found previously whereby sexual conversations are increased when same-sex parents and children share a common interest.

**Page 2** – Son thinks that his father talks to him because he wants to protect him by not making the same mistakes he made when he was younger. This is the same explanation given by parents for talking to their children about sexual matters.

**Page 2** – Son gets embarrassed talking about girls, relationships and things that he regards as private. This has been found before in that some young people do not want to talk about things they have experienced, which are private to them.

**Page 2** – Son has learnt about things (i.e. sexually transmitted infections) that his parents don't know about by attending the sex education roadshow. Non-faith schools are more likely to have outside visitors come into the school to provide sex education via roadshow events.

**Page 2** – Son prefers to learn about sex through various sources (e.g. mum, dad, school, etc) because each of them teach him different things about sexual matters. Should it be that there needs to be a multi-dimensional approach to teaching SRE? If so schools need to inform parents of the SRE that is given and parents need to be knowledgeable and willing to discuss sexual matters with their children.

**Page 2** – Children are more likely to get embarrassed if they think people (e.g. parents, friends, etc) discuss with others the sexual conversations that have occurred. This goes back to young people wanting sexual conversations to remain private. Furthermore, is it that they want these conversations to remain private encase they are ridiculed for not knowing enough about sexual matters? Vicious circle – Lack of knowledge → Embarrassment → Lack of communication → Lack of knowledge ... and so on.

**Page 3** – Parents don't have all the facts to teach their son about every sexual topic because it is not her job.

**Page 4** – More advice is given to girls because the consequences of sex affect them, more than boys.

**Page 4** – Son would not have been as open if parents had been present.

**Page 5** – Media show you things that you don't want for yourself, allowing you to reflect on the things that you do and don't want. Does the media help young people form their own identities based on the things they like and don't like?

### **Mother:**

**Page 6** – Mother was given poor SRE at school and parents did not discuss sexual matters with her at home.

**Page 6** – Mothers parents did not discuss sexual matters within the home as they did not have the knowledge to do so. Sexual matters were classed as taboo because people didn't have the knowledge to discuss aspect associated with sex and sexual behaviour.

**Page 7** – Mother and her older siblings did not get any SRE at home and one of the sisters fell pregnant at the age of 15. Is it that lack of SRE lead to parents making poor

sexual choices when they were younger? It would seem so especially as other mothers expressed regret with some of their sexual choices by not knowing enough about sexual matters. Category – Consequences to parents through lack of SRE.

**Page 7** – Older siblings and friends taught the mother the most about sexual matters because parents didn't educate her about sex.

**Page 7** – Parents '*pieced the facts together*' based on the little bits of sexual matters they were told and had heard by listening to other peoples conversations.

**Page 7** – Mother does not know about STIs because nobody has told her the facts. With the son being aware of this he used other sources to learn the facts that his parents couldn't discuss with him due to their lack of knowledge.

**Page 8** – Mother not aware of the SRE taught to her son at school. How are parents suppose to be able to talk to their children about what they have learnt if they are not told what, and when SRE is taught?

**Page 8** – Societal changes have allowed for sexual matters to be discussed more openly.

**Page 8** – Father talks the most to their son about sexual matters because they have a close and trusting relationship. Plus they are both males so they can relate more to each other more.

**Page 9** – Children talk to their friends to know how to behave and what the '*in-thing*' is. Looking for reassurance possibly?

**Page 10** – Parents do not discuss things with their children, which are personal to them (e.g. sexual fantasises, their sex life, etc). Why do some parents expect their children to discuss things that are personal to them when they don't do it themselves – Double standards!

**Page 11** – Parents who are open with their children when discussing sexual matters allows and encourages their children to want to talk to them more. This has been found in Study I and II with parents who are close and have a trusting relationship with their children.

**Page 11** – Mother would talk to her son more about sexual matters if she knew when it was being taught at school.

**Thought that came from the overall interview** – It was apparent that the son had a close bond with his father allowing them to discuss sexual matters openly. Although the father did not live in the family home there were set times of the week that he met his son to watch and/ or play football. This reinforces previous findings in that a close relationship between parents and their children occur when they share an activity



together. However, parents have to make the same effort as children and be willing to discuss sexual matters even if it is sometime uncomfortable for parents if they do not have the necessary knowledge. Interview 17 also reinforced the need to respect children's privacy and not attempt to discuss things that are personal to them as this can act as a barrier for potential sexual conversations in the future.

## **18<sup>th</sup> Family Interview**

### **Mother:**

**Page 1** – As with other parents the mother received very little SRE at school and sexual matters were not discussed openly within the home due to her parents being part of a strict Catholic religion.

**Page 1** – People were ashamed to talk about sexual matters in the olden days.

**Page 2** - Mother learnt about sexual matters from friends and listened to other peoples conversations and then by personal experiences when she was 15. Did having sexual experiences at an early age occur because parents were not told enough about sexual matters and therefore had to find out for themselves by engaging in matters associated with sex?

**Page 3** – Even though parents know Catholic school are not going to teach all of the SRE taught in non-faith schools they send their children to a Catholic school because they teach about morals and respect. Do parents not already do this?

**Page 3** – Parents don't know what SRE has been taught to their son.

**Page 4** – Mother thinks that her son gets embarrassed talking to her about sexual matters, so his step-father will take the role of discussing sexual matters with his step-son as the son's biological father is not present.

**Page 4** – Parents want to know when SRE is being taught so they can talk to their child and put it into perspective from the son's personal viewpoint.

**Page 4** – Mother thinks children talk to their friends to learn about things that are happening to them.

**Page 5** – If parents knew when SRE was taught this would prompt them to find out information if they did not know the facts.

**Page 6** – Mother thinks that her son looks at pornographic material on the Internet to learn about sex and women.

**Page 7** - Sex is the norm and has become very fashionable due to media sources.

**Page 7** - Societal changes have allowed for sex to become the norm.

**Son:**

**Page 8** – No sign-posting given with attending a Catholic school.

**Page 8** – Mainly learnt about SRE from mum, step-dad and friends, but not from school.

**Page 8** – Thinks parents have taught him about sexual matters so he does not get into trouble and make mistakes.

**Page 9** – Likes to talk to friends about sexual matters as he can relate to them more with going through the same things as him.

**Thought that came from the overall interview** – It was clear that the son had a close relationship with his mother and step-father. This was so much so that the step-father took on the fatherly role of discussing sexual matters with the son. There appeared to be no barriers within the family and parents seemed very practical towards how they educate their son about sexual matters.

## **19<sup>th</sup> Family Interview**

**Mother:**

**Page 1** – As with the mother in interview 8, Study II the mother in interview 9 was also not told about sexual matters at home and received a brief SRE session at school whereby it was treated as funny because it too ridiculous to be true due to the way it was presented.

**Page 1** – Mother confirms that if parents and their children do not have a close relationship sexual matters are hard to discuss.

**Page 1** – Mothers parents had insufficient knowledge to teach her about sexual matters and furthermore with her being brought-up in a strict Catholic family sexual matters were classed as a taboo subject and embarrassing to discuss.

**Page 2** – Mother respects her daughters wishes to not want to talk to her about sexual matters as she does not want to push her away, or stop her raising subjects at a time the daughter desires or needs to.

**Page 2** – As with other parents where sexual matters were not discussed in the family, the mother *'pieced information together'* based on what she was told by friends and by the sexual conversations that she overheard.

**Page 2 and 3** – As with the mother in interview 7 the mother in interview 8 learnt about sexual matters through personal experiences as nobody talked to her about sex, except her older friend. Mother was sexual active from a young age as it allowed her to find out the sexual information she needed. Mother feels she has learnt through her different relationships as she has got older and sees sex as a natural thing with the right person.

**Page 2 and 3** – Mother would have preferred to talk to her parents about sexual matters but because of religion the subject was forbidden as it did not correspond with the Catholic faith.

**Page 3** – Although the mother was brought-up in a strict Catholic environment, she disagrees with a lot of the religion her parents have followed and abided by when she was younger. Consequently she is not part of a religion since it was her own choice and furthermore will not push religious beliefs onto her children. Mother believes that people should steer their own life, not religion doing it for them. This indicates that religion is not as important to parents and their children, as it was for their parents/grandparents. Is it then that parents brought up in Catholic environment felt obliged to follow the religion for their own parent's sake? Furthermore do parent's who were brought-up in a Catholic environment oppose religion as it did not allow them to be the people they wanted to be and learn the sexual information they needed when they were younger?

**Page 4** – Mother has the up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach her daughter based on her occupation and the sexual experiences she has had.

**Page 4 and 5** – Mother is not aware of the SRE her daughter has received, but knows she accesses the Internet to find out things for herself with her being a private person. Mother feels this is okay as she is in the right forum where she can ask her mother about sexual matters, if she chooses to do so.

**Page 5** – Mother perceives her daughter to think sexual intercourse is a disgusting act for older people. Therefore, daughter finds it embarrassing to talk to her mother.

**Page 5** – Mother feels that since her daughter has had a proper boyfriend that sexual conversations have stopped between them. Is this due to the daughter feeling embarrassed talking about what she regards as personal in a private relationship? Mother respects her child's privacy and does not embarrass her by probing into her daughters private affairs.

**Page 5** – Mother prefers young people who visit the school to teach her daughter about sexual matters, especially since they have the up-to-date knowledge and can relate to young people, therefore making it less embarrassing for children.

**Page 6** – Mother thinks young people talk to their friends about sexual matters as a way of finding out sexual information so they can form their own identity.

**Page 7** – Mother thinks that schools should give more details on the SRE they teach so parents are equipped with the sorts of things their children know about. Once again this would prevent parents from asking probing questions, which leave their children embarrassed and less reluctant to discuss sexual matters in the future.

### **Daughters:**

**Page 9** – Daughter prefers to learn from young people who come into school as they have the information needed to give the facts and they understand more what it is like for young people with them being young themselves.

**Page 9** – Daughter finds it embarrassing to discuss sexual matters with her mother as sex is a personal thing and she would like to have her own private space and not be asked questions by her mother that invades her privacy.

**Page 9** – Daughter feels she knows enough about sexual matters and therefore does not need to ask people questions. Does she deter from asking about sexual matters encase people probe into her private life? YES!

**Page 10** – Daughter does not learn about sexual matters from her friends, but talking to them allows for a greater understanding of sexual matters.

**Page 10** – Daughter knows her mother would be open to talk about sexual matters, but she does not prefer to talk about sexual matters because she regards it as a private topic.

**Page 11** – Daughter would not have taken part in the interview if her mother had been present. Does this confirm the original choice to separate interviews between parents and their children?

**Thought that came from the overall interview** – The mother and her daughter did not have a close relationship and consequently sexual matters were not discussed. The mother appeared to have the SRE knowledge to teach her daughter about sexual matters, but the daughter would not discuss things with her mother that she regards as personal and private. The mother respected her daughter's wishes and did not push sexual conversations encase it prevented sexual matters being discussed in the future. Although the mother had the SRE knowledge based on her job, she also learnt a lot about sexual matters by engaging in early sexual intercourse when she was younger. The mother felt that this was the main way to learn about sexual matters as she was brought-up in a Catholic family where sexual matters were not discussed.

## 20<sup>th</sup> Family Interview

### **Mother:**

**Page 1** – The mother was given basic SRE facts at school and sexual matters were not discussed at home by either of her parents as they were embarrassed. History has not repeated itself with her children as she feels she has learnt by the mistakes that her parents made and therefore her and her husband talk openly about sexual matters with their own children.

**Page 2** – In the olden days children were not taught to question, where these days children are encouraged to ask questions if they do not understand something. Is this down to societal changes and the willingness of parents to learn from their parent's mistakes by discussing sexual matters more openly with their children? Even if on occasions parents don't have the knowledge to educate their children parents are more willing to find out the information that is needed to talk about sexual matters openly within the family.

**Page 2** – Mother thinks that people learn more about sexual matters from people's conversations in this day and age because sexual matters are more openly discussed.

**Page 2** – Mother thinks that you learn more about sexual matters when you are able to put it into some sort of serious relationship where you can be more comfortable with who you are as a person.

**Page 3** – Mother is aware of the SRE that her daughter has received by her daughter talking openly with her mother.

**Page 4** – Mother has talked openly with her daughter from a young age so she had the basic knowledge before SRE was given at school.

**Page 5** – Mother mainly talks to her children about sexual matters because her husband works a lot. However, the father does talk to his children about sexual matters when he is at home.

**Page 5** – Reiteration – mothers who have a close relationship with their daughters talk more about things that are personal and private to them.

**Page 5** – Female children are more interested in sexual matters at a younger age than boys because they start puberty sooner and have more physical and emotional changes.

**Page 5** – Mother has provided a comfortable environment for her children to talk openly about sexual matters and this has allowed them to steer the conversations with their parents at a time that is right for them.

**Page 5** – If parents are informed of the SRE taught at school this would allow them to find out the information needed to discuss sexual topics and allow them to initiate the conversation with their children based on what they have been taught.

**Daughter:**

**Page 8** – Daughter mainly talks to her mother about sexual matters because they have a close, trusting relationship.

**Page 9** – Mainly talks to her mother when they are alone as this allows them to have a private conversation away from her younger brother.

**Page 10** – Girls are not given any extra SRE, but they are just warned more about the consequences of having sex.

**Thought that came from the overall interview** – Interview 20 reiterated many of the previous findings in this research. For example, parents who talk openly with their children about sexual matters from a young age have a close and trusting relationship allowing for a secure environment to develop for SRE topics to be discussed. This was clear to see in that they had a close, respectful and calming influence on each other.

## **APPENDIX 17**

### **Demographic questionnaire for parents in families 1-10**

|  |                                    |                          |  |                         |                              |                       |
|--|------------------------------------|--------------------------|--|-------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>1) Where do the family live?</b>                        |                                    |                          |  |                         |                              |                       |
| <b>Middlesbrough</b>                                       |                                    |                          |  | <b>Cleveland</b>        |                              |                       |
| 10 (71%)   |                                    |                          |  | 4 (29%)                 |                              |                       |
| <b>2) Type of home?</b>                                    |                                    |                          |  |                         |                              |                       |
| <b>Detached</b>  |                                    | <b>Semi-detached</b>     |  |                         | <b>Terraced</b>              |                       |
| 2 (14%)  |                                    | 10 (72%)                 |  |                         | 2 (14%)                      |                       |
| <b>3) What qualifications do parents have?</b>             |                                    |                          |  |                         |                              |                       |
|  | <b>No qualifications</b>           | <b>NVQ</b>               | <b>O Levels</b>  | <b>A Levels</b>         | <b>1<sup>st</sup> Degree</b> | <b>Higher Degree</b>  |
| <b>Mother</b>  | 1 (10%)                            | 7 (70%)                  | 2 (20%)  |                         |                              |                       |
| <b>Father</b>  | 1 (10%)                            | 1(10%)                   | 2 (50%)  |                         |                              |                       |
| <b>4) Parent(s) participating in research:</b>             |                                    |                          |  |                         |                              |                       |
| <b>Mother</b>  | 10 (71%)                           |                          | <b>Father</b>  | 4 (29%)                 |                              |                       |
| <b>5) Age of parent(s):</b>                                |                                    |                          |  |                         |                              |                       |
|  | <b>20-29</b>                       | <b>30-39</b>             |  | <b>40-49</b>            |                              | <b>50-59</b>          |
| <b>Mother</b>  | 0                                  | 5 (50%)                  |  | 5 (50%)                 |                              |                       |
| <b>Father</b>  |                                    |                          |  | 4 (100%)                |                              |                       |
| <b>6) Marital status:</b>                                  |                                    |                          |  |                         |                              |                       |
| <b>Single</b>  |                                    | <b>Married</b>           |  |                         | <b>Divorced</b>              |                       |
| <b>Mother</b>  | 3 (21%) <sup>a</sup>               | 6 (43%) <sup>a</sup>     |  |                         | 1 (7%) <sup>a</sup>          |                       |
| <b>Father</b>  |                                    | 4 (100%)                 |  |                         |                              |                       |
| <b>7) Parents occupation:</b>                              |                                    |                          |  |                         |                              |                       |
|  | <b>Office work</b>                 |                          |  | <b>Education</b>        | <b>Nursing</b>               | <b>Prison service</b> |
| <b>Mother</b>  | 3 (30%)                            |                          |  | 3 (30%)                 | 3 (30%)                      | 1 (10%)               |
|  | <b>Engineer</b>                    |                          |  | <b>Tradesman</b>        |                              |                       |
| <b>Father</b>  | 2 (50%)                            |                          |  | 2 (50%)                 |                              |                       |
| <b>8) Origin:</b>  |                                    |                          |  |                         |                              |                       |
| <b>Mother</b>  | <b>White British =</b><br>10 (71%) | <b>Father</b>            | <b>White British = 3 (75%) British Black African = 1 (25%)</b> |                         |                              |                       |
| <b>9) Religion:</b>  |                                    |                          |  |                         |                              |                       |
|  | <b>Church of England</b>           |                          |  | <b>Catholic</b>         |                              |                       |
| <b>Mother</b>  | 4 (40%)                            |                          |  | 6 (60%)                 |                              |                       |
| <b>Father</b>  | 2 (50%)                            |                          |  | 2 (50%)                 |                              |                       |
| <b>10) Total Number of Children in Families:</b>           |                                    |                          |  |                         |                              |                       |
| <b>One</b>   | 5(38%)                             | <b>Two</b>               | 6 (46%)  | <b>Three</b>            | 2 (15%)                      |                       |
| <b>Gender of Children</b>                                  |                                    | <b>Male</b>              | 7 (54%)  | <b>Female</b>           | 6 (46%)                      |                       |
| <b>11) Age of child(ren) participating in research:</b>    |                                    |                          |  |                         |                              |                       |
| <b>Child 1</b>   | <b>Age 11</b><br>1 (8%)            | <b>Age 12</b><br>2 (15%) | <b>Age 13</b><br>2 (15%)                                       | <b>Age 14</b><br>1 (8%) | <b>Age 15</b><br>3 (23%)     | <b>Age16</b><br>1(8%) |
| <b>Child 2</b>   |                                    | <b>Age 12</b><br>1 (8%)  | <b>Age 13</b><br>2 (15%)                                       |                         |                              |                       |
| <b>12) Gender of child(ren) participating in research:</b> |                                    |                          |  |                         |                              |                       |
| <b>Child 1</b>   | <b>Male</b>                        | 6 (46%)                  |  |                         | <b>Female</b>                | 4 (31%)               |
| <b>Child 2</b>   | <b>Male</b>                        | 1 (8%)                   |  |                         | <b>Female</b>                | 2 (15%)               |
| <b>13) School attended by child(ren):</b>                  |                                    |                          |  |                         |                              |                       |
| <b>Lawrence Jackson</b>                                    | 2 (15%)                            |                          | <b>St Peters (Roman Catholic)</b>                              |                         |                              | 6 (46%)               |
| <b>Eston Park</b>  | 3 (23%)                            |                          | <b>Macmillan College</b>                                       |                         |                              | 2 (15%)               |



|   |                     |   |   |   |
|---|---------------------|---|---|---|
| <b>14) Age at which first became a parent:</b>  |                     |   |   |   |
| <b>Mother</b>   | 20-24 = 5 (50%)     | 25-29 = 4 (40%)                           | 30-34 = 1 (10%)                           |   |
| <b>Father</b>   |                     | 25-29 = 2 (50%)                           | 30-34 = 2 (50%)                           |   |
| <b>15) What sex education did you receive when attending school?</b>                          |                     |   |   |   |
|   | <b>Consequences</b> | <b>Periods &amp; Developments</b>         | <b>Basic Biology</b>                      | <b>None</b>   |
| <b>Mother - Primary</b>   |                     | 1 (11%)                                   | 2 (22%)                                   | 6 (67%)   |
| <b>Mother - Secondary</b>   | 1 (10%)             | 5 (50%)                                   | 1 (10%)                                   | 2 (20%)   |
| <b>Father – Primary</b>   |                     |   |   | 4 (100%)  |
| <b>Father - Secondary</b>   | 2 (50%)             |   | 2 (50%)                                   |   |
| <b>16) What age was sex education given?</b>  |                     |   |   |   |
|   | <b>Age 11</b>       | <b>Age 12</b>                             | <b>Age 13</b>                             | <b>Age 14</b>   |
| <b>Mother</b>   | 4 (40%)             |   | 2 (20%)                                   | 4 (40%)   |
| <b>Father</b>   |                     | 1 (25%)                                   | 2 (50%)                                   | 1 (25%)   |
| <b>17) Was this education enough for you?</b>   |                     |   |   |   |
| <b>Mother</b>   | <b>Yes</b>          | 2 (20%)                                   | <b>No</b>                                 | 8 (80%)   |
| <b>Father</b>   | <b>Yes</b>          | 1 (25%)                                   | <b>No</b>                                 | 3 (75%)   |
| <b>18) Who did you talk to about sexual matters when you were younger?</b>                    |                     |   |   |   |
|   | <b>Mother</b>       | <b>Peers</b>                              | <b>Sisters</b>                            | <b>Nobody</b>   |
| <b>Mother</b>   | 4 (40%)             | 4 (40%)                                   | 1 (10%)                                   | 1 (10%)   |
| <b>Father</b>   | 1 (25%)             | 2 (50%)                                   |   | 1 (25%)   |
| <b>19) Were your parents involved in the sex education you received?</b>                      |                     |   |   |   |
| <b>Mother</b>   | <b>Yes</b>          |   | <b>No</b>                                 | 10 (100%)   |
| <b>Father</b>   | <b>Yes</b>          |   | <b>No</b>                                 | 4 (40%)   |
| <b>20) Should parents have more involvement in the sex education given to their children?</b> |                     |   |   |   |
| <b>Mother</b>   | <b>Yes</b>          | 9 (90%)                                   | <b>No</b>                                 | 1 (10%)   |
| <b>Father</b>   | <b>Yes</b>          | 4 (100%)                                  | <b>No</b>                                 |   |
| <b>21) Do you know of the initiatives that are used to teach your child about sex?</b>        |                     |   |   |   |
| <b>Mother</b>   | <b>Yes</b>          | 1 (10%)                                   | <b>No</b>                                 | 9 (90%)   |
| <b>Father</b>   | <b>Yes</b>          |   | <b>No</b>                                 | 4 (100%)  |
| <b>22) Do you know what sex education is offered to your child at school?</b>                 |                     |   |   |   |
| <b>Mother</b>   | <b>Yes</b>          | 4 (40%)                                   | <b>No</b>                                 | 6 (60%)   |
| <b>Father</b>   | <b>Yes</b>          |   | <b>No</b>                                 | 4 (100%)  |
| <b>23) Are there aspects of sex that you would prefer for your child not to be taught?</b>    |                     |   |   |   |
| <b>Mother</b>   | <b>Yes</b>          | 2 (20%)                                   | <b>No</b>                                 | 8 (80%)   |
| <b>Father</b>   | <b>Yes</b>          | 2 (50%)                                   | <b>No</b>                                 | 2 (50%)   |
| <b>24) Were you asked whether you wanted your child to be taught SRE at school?</b>           |                     |   |   |   |
| <b>Mother</b>   | <b>Yes</b>          | 4 (40%)                                   | <b>No</b>                                 | 6 (60%)   |
| <b>Father</b>   | <b>Yes</b>          | 2 (50%)                                   | <b>No</b>                                 | 2 (50%)   |
| <b>25) Have you seen the sex education policy for the school your child attends?</b>          |                     |   |   |   |
| <b>Mother</b>   | <b>Yes</b>          | 2 (20%)                                   | <b>No</b>                                 | 8 (80%)   |
| <b>Father</b>   | <b>Yes</b>          |   | <b>No</b>                                 | 4 (100%)  |
| <b>26) What are the most important aspects of sex that you want your child to be taught?</b>  |                     |   |   |   |
|   | <b>Puberty</b>      | <b>Contraception &amp; STI prevention</b> | <b>Loving Relationships &amp; Respect</b> | <b>Disadvantages of Early Sex (including gay sex)</b> |
| <b>Mother</b>   | 3 (14%)             | 9 (41%)                                   | 4 (29%)                                   | 6 (27%)   |
| <b>Father</b>   |                     | 5 (46%)                                   | 2 (18%)                                   | 4 (36%)   |

|   |  |           |                            |    |               |  |                          |  |
|---|--|-----------|----------------------------|----|---------------|--|--------------------------|--|
| 27) At what age do you want your child to be start to be taught about sex?  |  |           |                            |    |               |  |                          |  |
|   | Age 6  |           | Age 11                     |    | Age 12        |  |                          |  |
| Mother  | 4 (40%)  |           | 2 (20%)                    |    | 4 (40%)       |  |                          |  |
| Father  |  |           | 3 (75%)                    |    | 1 (25%)       |  |                          |  |
| 28) Should your child be given more sex education than that being delivered?  |  |           |                            |    |               |  |                          |  |
| Mother  | Yes  | 6 (60%)   |                            | No | 4 (40%)       |  |                          |  |
| Father  | Yes  | 4 (100%)  |                            | No |               |  |                          |  |
| 29) Should your child be given less sex education that that being delivered?  |  |           |                            |    |               |  |                          |  |
| Mother  | Yes  | 1 (10%)   |                            | No | 9 (90%)       |  |                          |  |
| Father  | Yes  |           |                            | No | 4 (100%)      |  |                          |  |
| 30) Who do you think your child talks to most about sexual matters?   |  |           |                            |    |               |  |                          |  |
|   | Both Parents   |           | Mother                     |    | Father        |  | Peers                    |  |
| Mother  | 1 (10%)  |           | 8 (80%)                    |    |               |  | 1 (10%)                  |  |
| Father  |  |           | 1 (25%)                    |    | 1 (25%)       |  | 2 (50%)                  |  |
| 31) Do you think your child uses computers to learn about sexual matters?   |  |           |                            |    |               |  |                          |  |
| Mother  | Yes  | 7 (70%)   |                            | No | 3 (30%)       |  |                          |  |
| Father  | Yes  |           |                            | No | 4 (100%)      |  |                          |  |
| 32) Do you think your child reads adult material to learn about sex?  |  |           |                            |    |               |  |                          |  |
| Mother  | Yes  | 7 (70%)   |                            | No | 3 (30%)       |  |                          |  |
| Father  | Yes  | 2 (50%)   |                            | No | 2 (50%)       |  |                          |  |
| 33) Do you think your child uses the media to learn about sexual matters?   |  |           |                            |    |               |  |                          |  |
| Mother  | Yes  | 8 (80%)   |                            | No | 2 (20%)       |  |                          |  |
| Father  | Yes  | 2 (50%)   |                            | No | 2 (50%)       |  |                          |  |
| 34) Are there TV programmes that your child watches that contain sexual matters?  |  |           |                            |    |               |  |                          |  |
| Mother  | Yes  | 10 (100%) |                            | No |               |  |                          |  |
| Father  | Yes  | 4 (100%)  |                            | No |               |  |                          |  |
| 35) Are you happy about the sexual messages passed onto your child via the media?   |  |           |                            |    |               |  |                          |  |
| Mother  | Yes  |           |                            | No | 10 (100%)     |  |                          |  |
| Father  | Yes  |           |                            | No | 4 (100%)      |  |                          |  |
| 36) Does your child talk to you about things they have seen/heard in the media?   |  |           |                            |    |               |  |                          |  |
| Mother  | Yes  | 8 (80%)   |                            | No | 2 (20%)       |  |                          |  |
| Father  | Yes  | 2 (20%)   |                            | No | 2 (20%)       |  |                          |  |
| 37) What sex education matters have you discussed within the family?  |  |           |                            |    |               |  |                          |  |
|   | Puberty  |           | Delay of Sexual Initiation |    | Contraception |  | General SRE Questions    |  |
| Mother  | 7 (32%)  |           | 5 (23%)                    |    | 4 (18%)       |  | 6 (27%)                  |  |
| Father  |  |           | 2 (22%)                    |    | 1 (11%)       |  | 6 (67%)                  |  |
| 38) Have these discussions been prompted by your child or you?  |  |           |                            |    |               |  |                          |  |
|   | Mother   |           | Father                     |    | Child         |  | Both Parent(s) and Child |  |
| Mother  | 4 (40%)  |           |                            |    | 2 (20%)       |  | 4 (40%)                  |  |
| Father  |  |           | 1 (10%)                    |    |               |  | 3 (30%)                  |  |
| 39) Do you think your child receives better sex education than you did when younger?  |  |           |                            |    |               |  |                          |  |
| Mother  | Yes  | 10 (100%) |                            | No |               |  |                          |  |
| Father  | Yes  | 3 (75%)   |                            | No | 1 (25%)       |  |                          |  |
| 40) Do you think that if you had received the sex education of your child that you may have made different sexual decisions with your life? |  |           |                            |    |               |  |                          |  |
| Mother  | Yes  | 3 (30%)   |                            | No | 7 (70%)       |  |                          |  |
| Father  | Yes  |           |                            | No | 4 (100%)      |  |                          |  |
| 41) If yes, what decisions do you think you would have made differently?  |  |           |                            |    |               |  |                          |  |
| Mother  | Delayed sexual intercourse; Contraception choices and feeling less pressure to have sex. |           |                            |    |               |  |                          |  |

<sup>a</sup> Percentages have been rounded up and therefore do not equal to 100% exactly

## **APPENDIX 18**

### **Demographic questionnaire for parents in Families 11-20**

|  |                           |               |                            |                          |            |
|--|---------------------------|---------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|------------|
| <b>1) Where do the family live?</b>                        |                           |               |                            |                          |            |
| Middlesbrough  |                           |               | 12 (100%)                  |                          |            |
| <b>2) Type of home?</b>                                    |                           |               |                            |                          |            |
| Detached   |                           | Semi-detached |                            | Terraced                 |            |
| 1 (8%)   |                           | 9 (75%)       |                            | 2 (17%)                  |            |
| <b>3) What qualifications do parents have?</b>             |                           |               |                            |                          |            |
|  | NVQ                       | O Levels      | A Levels                   | 1 <sup>st</sup> Degree   |            |
| Mother   | 1 (10%)                   | 3 (30%)       | 4 (40%)                    | 2 (20%)                  |            |
| Father   |                           | 2 (100%)      |                            |                          |            |
| <b>4) Parent(s) participating in research:</b>             |                           |               |                            |                          |            |
| Mother   | 10 (83%)                  |               | Father                     | 2 (17%)                  |            |
| <b>5) Age of parent(s):</b>                                |                           |               |                            |                          |            |
|  | 30-39                     |               | 40-49                      |                          | 50-59      |
| Mother   | 6 (60%)                   |               | 3 (30%)                    |                          | 1 (10%)    |
| Father   | 2 (100%)                  |               |                            |                          |            |
| <b>6) Marital status:</b>                                  |                           |               |                            |                          |            |
| Single   |                           | Married       |                            | Divorced                 |            |
| Mother   | 2 (20%)                   |               | 5 (50%)                    |                          | 3 (30%)    |
| Father   |                           |               | 3 (100%)                   |                          |            |
| <b>7) Parents Occupation:</b>                              |                           |               |                            |                          |            |
|  | Office work               | Education     |                            | Nursing                  | Home Maker |
| Mother   | 2 (20%)                   |               | 2 (20%)                    |                          | 3 (20%)    |
|  | Engineer                  |               |                            | Manager                  |            |
| Father   | 1 (50%)                   |               |                            | 1 (50%)                  |            |
| <b>8) Origin:</b>  |                           |               |                            |                          |            |
| Mother   | White British = 10 (100%) |               | Father                     | White British = 2 (100%) |            |
| <b>9) Religion:</b>  |                           |               |                            |                          |            |
|  | Church of England         |               | Catholic                   |                          |            |
| Mother   | 6 (60%)                   |               | 4 (40%)                    |                          |            |
| Father   | 2 (100%)                  |               |                            |                          |            |
| <b>10) Total Number of Children in Families:</b>           |                           |               |                            |                          |            |
| One  | 1 (10%)                   | Two           | 5 (50%)                    | Three                    | 4 (40%)    |
| Gender of Children   |                           | Male          | 14 (52%)                   | Female                   | 13 (48%)   |
| <b>11) Age of child(ren) participating in research:</b>    |                           |               |                            |                          |            |
| Child 1  | Age 12                    | Age 13        | Age 14                     | Age 15                   | Age 16     |
|  |                           | 2 (17%)       | 5 (42%)                    | 3 (25%)                  |            |
| Child 2  | Age 12                    | Age 13        |                            |                          | 1 (8%)     |
|  | 1 (8%)                    |               |                            |                          |            |
| <b>12) Gender of child(ren) participating in research:</b> |                           |               |                            |                          |            |
| Child 1  | Male                      | 5 (42%)       |                            | Female                   | 4 (33%)    |
| Child 2  | Male                      | 3 (25%)       |                            | Female                   |            |
| <b>13) School attended by child(ren):</b>                  |                           |               |                            |                          |            |
| Lawrence Jackson   |                           | 4 (33%)       | St Peters (Roman Catholic) |                          | 2 (17%)    |
| Hall Garth   |                           | 3 (50%)       | Nunthorpe                  |                          | 3 (50%)    |

|  |                    |                           |                 |           |
|--|--------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| <b>14) Age at which first became a parent:</b>   |                    |                           |                 |           |
| Mother   | 20-24 = 6<br>(60%) | 25-29 = 2<br>(20%)        | 30-34 = 2 (20%) |           |
| Father   | 20-24 = 1<br>(50%) | 25-29 = 1<br>(50%)        |                 |           |
| <b>15) What sex education did you receive when attending school?</b>                         |                    |                           |                 |           |
|  | Consequences       | Periods &<br>Developments | Basic Biology   | None      |
| Mother -<br>Primary  |                    |                           | 1 (10%)         | 9 (90%)   |
| Mother -<br>Secondary  |                    | 8 (50%)                   | 8 (50%)         |           |
| Father –<br>Primary  |                    |                           |                 | 2 (100%)  |
| Father -<br>Secondary  | 1 (33%)            |                           | 2 (67%)         |           |
| <b>16) What age was sex education given?</b>   |                    |                           |                 |           |
|  | Age 11             | Age 12                    | Age 13          |           |
| Mother   | 5 (50%)            | 3 (30%)                   | 2 (20%)         |           |
| Father   | 1 (50%)            |                           | 1 (50%)         |           |
| <b>17) Was this education enough for you?</b>  |                    |                           |                 |           |
| Mother   | Yes                | 3 (30%)                   | No              | 7 (70%)   |
| Father   | Yes                |                           | No              | 2 (100%)  |
| <b>18) Who did you talk to about sexual matters when you were younger?</b>                   |                    |                           |                 |           |
|  | Mother             | Peers                     | Sisters         | Nobody    |
| Mother   |                    | 6 (60%)                   | 2 (20%)         | 2 (20%)   |
| Father   | 1 (10%)            | 1 (10%)                   |                 |           |
| <b>19) Were your parents involved in the sex education you received?</b>                     |                    |                           |                 |           |
| Mother   | Yes                |                           | No              | 10 (100%) |
| Father   | Yes                |                           | No              | 2 (20%)   |
| <b>20)Should parents have more involvement in the sex education given to their children?</b> |                    |                           |                 |           |
| Mother   | Yes                | 6 (60%)                   | No              | 4 (40%)   |
| Father   | Yes                |                           | No              | 2 (100%)  |
| <b>21) Do you know of the initiatives that are used to teach your child about sex?</b>       |                    |                           |                 |           |
| Mother   | Yes                | 3 (30%)                   | No              | 7 (70%)   |
| Father   | Yes                |                           | No              | 2 (20%)   |
| <b>22) Do you know what sex education is offered to your child at school?</b>                |                    |                           |                 |           |
| Mother   | Yes                | 5 (50%)                   | No              | 75 (50%)  |
| Father   | Yes                |                           | No              | 2 (100%)  |
| <b>23) Are there aspects of sex that you would prefer for your child not to be taught?</b>   |                    |                           |                 |           |
| Mother   | Yes                |                           | No              | 10 (100%) |
| Father   | Yes                |                           | No              | 2 (100%)  |
| <b>24) Were you asked whether you wanted your child to be taught SRE at school?</b>          |                    |                           |                 |           |
| Mother   | Yes                | 4 (40%)                   | No              | 6 (60%)   |
| Father   | Yes                | 1 (50%)                   | No              | 1 (50%)   |
| <b>25) Have you seen the sex education policy for the school your child attends?</b>         |                    |                           |                 |           |
| Mother   | Yes                | 1 (10%)                   | No              | 9 (90%)   |
| Father   | Yes                | 1 (50%)                   | No              | 1 (50%)   |

|  |  |                                      |   |                                 |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| <b>26) What are the most important aspects of sex that you want your child to be taught?</b> |  |                                      |   |                                 |
|  | <b>Safe sex &amp; Responsibilities</b> | <b>Contraception/ STI prevention</b> | <b>Loving Relationships &amp; Respect</b> | <b>Sex and the Law</b>          |
| <b>Mother</b>  | 8 (29%)                                | 9 (32%)                              | 9 (32%)                                   | 2 (7%)                          |
| <b>Father</b>  | 2 (33%)                                | 2 (33%)                              | 1 (17%)                                   | 1 (17%)                         |
| <b>27) At what age do you want your child to start to be taught about sex?</b>               |  |                                      |   |                                 |
|  | <b>Age 6</b>                           | <b>Age 11</b>                        | <b>Age 12</b>                             |                                 |
| <b>Mother</b>  | 3 (30%)                                | 4 (40%)                              | 3 (30%)                                   |                                 |
| <b>Father</b>  | 1 (50%)                                |                                      | 1 (50%)                                   |                                 |
| <b>28) Should your child be given more sex education than that being delivered?</b>          |  |                                      |   |                                 |
| <b>Mother</b>  | <b>Yes</b>                             | 10 (100%)                            | <b>No</b>                                 |                                 |
| <b>Father</b>  | <b>Yes</b>                             | 1 (50%)                              | <b>No</b>                                 | 1 (50%)                         |
| <b>29) Should your child be given less sex education than that being delivered?</b>          |  |                                      |   |                                 |
| <b>Mother</b>  | <b>Yes</b>                             | 1 (10%)                              | <b>No</b>                                 | 9 (90%)                         |
| <b>Father</b>  | <b>Yes</b>                             |                                      | <b>No</b>                                 | 2 (100%)                        |
| <b>30) Who do you think your child talks to most about sexual matters?</b>                   |  |                                      |   |                                 |
|  | <b>Both Parents</b>                    | <b>Mother</b>                        | <b>Father</b>                             | <b>Peers</b>                    |
| <b>Mother</b>  | 1 (10%)                                | 2 (20%)                              | 1 (10%)                                   | 6 (60%)                         |
| <b>Father</b>  |  |                                      | 1 (50%)                                   | 1 (50%)                         |
| <b>31) Do you think your child uses computers to learn about sexual matters?</b>             |  |                                      |   |                                 |
| <b>Mother</b>  | <b>Yes</b>                             | 7 (70%)                              | <b>No</b>                                 | 3 (30%)                         |
| <b>Father</b>  | <b>Yes</b>                             | 2 (100%)                             | <b>No</b>                                 |                                 |
| <b>32) Do you think your child reads adult material to learn about sex?</b>                  |  |                                      |   |                                 |
| <b>Mother</b>  | <b>Yes</b>                             | 7 (70%)                              | <b>No</b>                                 | 3 (30%)                         |
| <b>Father</b>  | <b>Yes</b>                             | 2 (100%)                             | <b>No</b>                                 |                                 |
| <b>33) Do you think your child uses the media to learn about sexual matters?</b>             |  |                                      |   |                                 |
| <b>Mother</b>  | <b>Yes</b>                             | 8 (80%)                              | <b>No</b>                                 | 2 (20%)                         |
| <b>Father</b>  | <b>Yes</b>                             | 1 (10%)                              | <b>No</b>                                 | 1 (10%)                         |
| <b>34) Are there TV programmes that your child watches that contain sexual matters?</b>      |  |                                      |   |                                 |
| <b>Mother</b>  | <b>Yes</b>                             | 10 (100%)                            | <b>No</b>                                 |                                 |
| <b>Father</b>  | <b>Yes</b>                             | 2 (100%)                             | <b>No</b>                                 |                                 |
| <b>35) Are you happy about the sexual messages passed onto your child via the media?</b>     |  |                                      |   |                                 |
| <b>Mother</b>  | <b>Yes</b>                             | 3 (30%)                              | <b>No</b>                                 | 8 (80%)                         |
| <b>Father</b>  | <b>Yes</b>                             | 1 (50%)                              | <b>No</b>                                 | 1 (50%)                         |
| <b>36) Does your child talk to you about things they have seen/heard in the media?</b>       |  |                                      |   |                                 |
| <b>Mother</b>  | <b>Yes</b>                             | 8 (80%)                              | <b>No</b>                                 | 2 (20%)                         |
| <b>Father</b>  | <b>Yes</b>                             | 2 (100%)                             | <b>No</b>                                 |                                 |
| <b>37) What sex education matters have you discussed within the family?</b>                  |  |                                      |   |                                 |
|  | <b>Relationships</b>                   | <b>Consequences</b>                  | <b>Contraception</b>                      | <b>Anything they ask</b>        |
| <b>Mother</b>  | 7 (37%) <sup>a</sup>                   | 3 (16%) <sup>a</sup>                 | 6 (32%) <sup>a</sup>                      | 3 (16%) <sup>a</sup>            |
| <b>Father</b>  |  |                                      | 1 (33%)                                   | 2 (67%)                         |
| <b>38) Have these discussions been prompted by your child or you?</b>                        |  |                                      |   |                                 |
|  | <b>Mother</b>                          | <b>Father</b>                        | <b>Child</b>                              | <b>Both Parent(s) and Child</b> |
| <b>Mother</b>  | 4 (40%)                                |                                      | 2 (20%)                                   | 4 (40%)                         |
| <b>Father</b>  |  | 1 (50%)                              | 1 (50%)                                   |                                 |
| <b>39) Do you think your child receives better sex education than you did when younger?</b>  |  |                                      |   |                                 |
| <b>Mother</b>  | <b>Yes</b>                             | 10 (100%)                            | <b>No</b>                                 |                                 |
| <b>Father</b>  | <b>Yes</b>                             | 2 (20%)                              | <b>No</b>                                 |                                 |

|  |  |         |           |          |
|--|--|---------|-----------|----------|
| <b>40) Do you think that if you had received the sex education of your child that you may have made different sexual decisions with your life?</b> |  |         |           |          |
| <b>Mother</b>  | <b>Yes</b>   | 4 (40%) | <b>No</b> | 6 (60%)  |
| <b>Father</b>  | <b>Yes</b>   |         | <b>No</b> | 2 (100%) |
| <b>41) If yes, what decisions do you think you would have made differently?</b>  |  |         |           |          |
| <b>Mother</b>  | <b>Had children later in life (2 mothers); Better use of contraception and Would have viewed sex in less of a taboo way.</b> |         |           |          |

<sup>a</sup> Percentages have been rounded up and therefore do not equal to 100% exactly

## **APPENDIX 19**

### **Demographic Questionnaire for Children in Families 1-10**



| Demographics for both boys and girls                      |               |                            |                   |                      |                |                      |
|---|---------------|----------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| 1) Gender:  |               |                            |                   |                      |                |                      |
| Male  |               |                            | Female            |                      |                |                      |
| 7 (54%)   |               |                            | 6 (46%)           |                      |                |                      |
| 2) Age:   |               |                            |                   |                      |                |                      |
|   | Age 11        | Age 12                     | Age 13            | Age 14               | Age 15         | Age 16               |
| Boys  | 1 (8%)        | 2 (15%)                    | 2 (15%)           |                      | 2 (15%)        |                      |
| Girls   |               |                            | 3 (23%)           | 1 (8%)               | 1 (8%)         | 1 (8%)               |
| 3) What sex education were you given at school?           |               |                            |                   |                      |                |                      |
|   | A Video       | Talk from Nurse            | Talk from Teacher | None                 |                |                      |
| Primary   | 4 (15%)       |                            | 4 (15%)           | 5 (19%)              |                |                      |
|   | Biology Class | Roadshow                   | Talk from Nurse   | Videos               |                |                      |
| Secondary   | 9 (33%)       |                            | 3 (11%)           | 2 (7%)               |                |                      |
| 4) What were you told about:                              |               |                            |                   |                      |                |                      |
| Puberty   | Relationships | Emotions                   | Sex/Pregnancy     | Hormones             | Contraception  | STIs                 |
| 10 (15 %)   | 10 (15%)      | 10 (15%)                   | 10 (15%)          | 10 (15%)             | 8 (12%)        | 7(11%)               |
| 5) Do you think this sex education was enough?            |               |                            |                   |                      |                |                      |
| Yes   | 7 (54%)       |                            |                   | No                   | 6 (46%)        |                      |
| 6) Were you left still wanting to know more?              |               |                            |                   |                      |                |                      |
| Yes   | 7 (54%)       |                            | No                | 6 (4%)               |                |                      |
| 7) What age do you think SRE should be taught?            |               |                            |                   |                      |                |                      |
|   | Age 9         | Age 10                     | Age 11            |                      | Age 12         |                      |
|   | 4 (31%)       | 1 (8%)                     | 5 (38%)           |                      | 3 (23%)        |                      |
| 8) How often was SRE taught?                              |               |                            |                   |                      |                |                      |
|   | Never         | Once                       | Once a year       | Twice a Year         | Every Month    |                      |
| Primary   | 4 (18%)       | 6 (27%)                    | 2 (9%)            |                      |                |                      |
| Secondary   |               |                            | 6 (27%)           | 3 (14%)              | 1 (5%)         |                      |
| 9) Who delivered this SRE?                                |               |                            |                   |                      |                |                      |
| Teacher   |               |                            | Outside Visitors  |                      |                |                      |
| 10 (77%)  |               |                            | 3 (23%)           |                      |                |                      |
| 10) Who did you prefer to teach you about SRE matters?    |               |                            |                   |                      |                |                      |
| Teacher   |               | Nurse                      |                   | Outside Visitors     |                | No Preference        |
| 7 (54%) <sup>a</sup>                                      |               | 1 (8%) <sup>a</sup>        |                   | 4 (31%) <sup>a</sup> |                | 1 ( 8%) <sup>a</sup> |
| 11) Why do you prefer this source to teach you SRE?       |               |                            |                   |                      |                |                      |
| Won't see them again                                      |               | Better Understanding of me |                   |                      | More Qualified |                      |
| 2 (15%)   |               | 8 (62%)                    |                   |                      | 3 (23%)        |                      |
| 12) What sex education initiatives are used to teach SRE? |               |                            |                   |                      |                |                      |
| Roadshows   | Videos        | Lessons                    |                   | PSHE Days Out        | Focused Talks  |                      |
| 3 (14%)   | 10 (48%)      | 1 (14%)                    |                   | 3 (14%)              | 4 (19%)        |                      |
| 13) How would you like SRE to be taught?                  |               |                            |                   |                      |                |                      |
| Roadshows   |               |                            | Lessons           |                      |                |                      |
| 7 (53%)   |               |                            | 6 (46%)           |                      |                |                      |
| 14) Do you use computers to learn about SRE matters?      |               |                            |                   |                      |                |                      |
| Yes   | 8 (62%)       |                            | No                | 5 (39%)              |                |                      |

|  |                           |                    |                      |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| 15) If you use computers to learn about SRE matters, what sources do you access? |                           |                    |                      |
| Internet   | Videos                    | DVDs               | Computer Games       |
| 3 (38%)  | 2 (25%)                   | 2 (25%)            | 1 (13%)              |
| 16) Do you use adult magazines to learn about sexual matters?                    |                           |                    |                      |
| Yes  | 8 (62%)                   | No                 | 5 (39%)              |
| 17) Do you learn from television programmes that have sexual content?            |                           |                    |                      |
| Yes  | 11 ( %)                   | No                 | 2 ( %)               |
| 18) Do you learn about SRE through the media?                                    |                           |                    |                      |
| Yes  | 12 ( %)                   | No                 | 1 ( %)               |
| 19) Do you talk to your parents about SRE matters?                               |                           |                    |                      |
| Yes  | 8 (62%)                   | No                 | 5 (39%)              |
| 20) If so, which parent do you talk to?  |                           |                    |                      |
| Mother   | Father                    | Neither            |                      |
| 7 (62%)  | 1 (8%)                    | 5 (38%)            |                      |
| 21) Do you feel comfortable talking to your parent(s) about sexual matters?      |                           |                    |                      |
| Yes  | 8 (62%)                   | No                 | 5 (39%)              |
| 22) Do you feel embarrassed talking to your parent(s) about sexual matters?      |                           |                    |                      |
| Yes  | 8 (62%)                   | No                 | 5 (39%)              |
| 23) Do you talk to your friends about sexual matters?                            |                           |                    |                      |
| Yes  | 9 (69%)                   | No                 | 4 (31%)              |
| 24) If yes, what do you and your friends talk about?                             |                           |                    |                      |
| Anything and Everything  | Talk about Sex in General | The Opposite Sex   |                      |
| 6 (67%)  | 1 (11%)                   | 2 (22%)            |                      |
| 25) Do many of your friends have boyfriends/girlfriends?                         |                           |                    |                      |
| Yes  | 8 (62%)                   | No                 | 5 (39%)              |
| 26) Do you have a boyfriend/girlfriend?  |                           |                    |                      |
| Yes  | 3 (23%)                   | No                 | 10 (77%)             |
| 27) Do you know if your friends talk to their boyfriend/girlfriend about sex?    |                           |                    |                      |
| Yes  | 7 (54%)                   | No                 | 6 (46%)              |
| 28) Do you talk to your boyfriend/girlfriend about sexual matters?               |                           |                    |                      |
| Yes  | 2 (67%)                   | No                 | 1 (33%)              |
| 29) If yes, what sorts of things do you talk about?                              |                           |                    |                      |
| Nothing Specific   | When to Have Sex          | Contraception      | Consequences of Sex  |
| 1 (14%)  | 1 (14%)                   | 3 (43%)            | 2 (29%)              |
| 30) Who do you prefer to talk to about sex overall?                              |                           |                    |                      |
| Mother   | Friends                   | Father             |                      |
| 6 (46%)  | 6 (46%)                   | 1 (8%)             |                      |
| 31) How important is it for school to provide you with SRE?                      |                           |                    |                      |
| Very Important   | Quite Important           | Not Very Important | Not Important at all |
| 8 (62%)  | 5 (39%)                   |                    |                      |
| 32) How would you rate the SRE that you have received at school?                 |                           |                    |                      |
| Very Good  | Good                      | Okay               | Poor                 |
| 2 (15%)  | 5 (38%)                   | 5 (38%)            | 1 (8%)               |

<sup>a</sup> Percentages have been rounded up and therefore do not equal to 100% exactly

## **APPENDIX 20**

### **Demographic Questionnaire for Children in Families 11-20**

| Demographic for both boys and girls                       |                           |                             |                           |                      |                           |                  |
|---|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| 1) Gender:  |                           |                             |                           |                      |                           |                  |
| Male  |                           |                             |                           | Female               |                           |                  |
| 8 (67%)   |                           |                             |                           | 4 (33%)              |                           |                  |
| 2) Age:   |                           |                             |                           |                      |                           |                  |
|   | Age 12                    | Age 13                      | Age 14                    | Age 15               | Age 16                    |                  |
| Boys  | 1 (8%)                    | 1 (8%)                      | 5 (43%)                   |                      | 1 (8%)                    |                  |
| Girls   |                           | 1 (8%)                      | 1 (8%)                    | 2 (17%)              |                           |                  |
| 3) What sex education were you given at school?           |                           |                             |                           |                      |                           |                  |
|   | A Video                   | Talk from Nurse             | Talk from Teacher         | None                 |                           |                  |
| Primary   | 4 (31%)                   | 3 (23%)                     | 3 (23%)                   | 3 (23%)              |                           |                  |
|   | Biology Class             | Roadshow                    | Talk from Nurse           | Videos               |                           |                  |
| Secondary   | 11 (41%) <sup>a</sup>     | 6 (22%) <sup>a</sup>        | 5 (19%) <sup>a</sup>      | 5 (19%) <sup>a</sup> |                           |                  |
| 4) What were you told about:                              |                           |                             |                           |                      |                           |                  |
| Puberty<br>12 (17%)                                       | Relationships<br>12 (17%) | Emotions<br>5 (7%)          | Sex/Pregnancy<br>12 (17%) | Hormones<br>6 (8%)   | Contraception<br>12 (17%) | STIs<br>12 (17%) |
| 5) Do you think this sex education was enough?            |                           |                             |                           |                      |                           |                  |
| Yes   | 8 (67%)                   |                             |                           | No                   | 4 (33%)                   |                  |
| 6) Were you left still wanting to know more?              |                           |                             |                           |                      |                           |                  |
| Yes   | 4 (33%)                   |                             | No                        | 8 (64%)              |                           |                  |
| 7) What age do you think SRE should be taught             |                           |                             |                           |                      |                           |                  |
| Age 9   | Age 10                    | Age 11                      |                           | Age 12               |                           |                  |
| 1 (8%)  | 6 (50%)                   | 3(25%)                      |                           | 2 (17%)              |                           |                  |
| 8) How often was SRE taught?                              |                           |                             |                           |                      |                           |                  |
|   | Once                      | Once a Year                 | Every 2 Months            | Every Month          | Weekly                    |                  |
| Primary   | 12 (100%)                 |                             |                           |                      |                           |                  |
| Secondary   |                           | 5 (42%)                     | 3 (25%)                   | 3 (25%)              | 1 (8%)                    |                  |
| 9) Who delivered this SRE?                                |                           |                             |                           |                      |                           |                  |
| Teacher   |                           | Outside Visitors            |                           | Nurse                |                           |                  |
| 11 (58%)  |                           | 7 (37%)                     |                           | 1 (5%)               |                           |                  |
| 10) Who did you prefer to teach you about SRE matters?    |                           |                             |                           |                      |                           |                  |
| Teacher   |                           | Nurse                       | Outside Visitors          |                      | No Preference             |                  |
| 5 (42%)   |                           | 1 (8%)                      | 4 (33%)                   |                      | 2 (17%)                   |                  |
| 11) Why do you prefer this source to teach you SRE?       |                           |                             |                           |                      |                           |                  |
| Won't see them again                                      |                           | Better Understanding of SRE |                           | More Qualified       |                           |                  |
| 4 (33%)   |                           | 6 (50%)                     |                           | 2 (17%)              |                           |                  |
| 12) What sex education initiatives are used to teach SRE? |                           |                             |                           |                      |                           |                  |
| Roadshows   | Videos                    | Lessons                     | PSHE Days Out             | Focused Talks        |                           |                  |
| 8 (42%)   | 5 (26%)                   | 3 (16%)                     | 2 (11%)                   | 1 (5%)               |                           |                  |
| 13) How would you like SRE to be taught?                  |                           |                             |                           |                      |                           |                  |
| Roadshows   |                           |                             | Lessons                   |                      |                           |                  |
| 6 (50%)   |                           |                             | 6 (50%)                   |                      |                           |                  |
| 14) Do you use computers to learn about SRE matters?      |                           |                             |                           |                      |                           |                  |
| Yes   | 8 (67%)                   |                             | No                        | 4 (33%)              |                           |                  |

<sup>a</sup> Percentages have been rounded up and therefore do not equal to 100% exactly

|   |                           |                    |                      |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| 15) Are there aspects of sex that you would prefer for your child not to be taught? |                           |                    |                      |
| Internet  | Videos                    | DVDs               | Computer Games       |
| 2 (25%)   | 2 (25%)                   | 3 (38%)            | 1 (13%)              |
| 16) Do you use adult magazines to learn about sexual matters?                       |                           |                    |                      |
| Yes   | 6 (50%)                   | No                 | 6 (50%)              |
| 17) Do you learn from television programmes that have sexual content?               |                           |                    |                      |
| Yes   | 10 (83%)                  | No                 | 2 (17%)              |
| 18) Do you learn about SRE through the media?                                       |                           |                    |                      |
| Yes   | 11 (92%)                  | No                 | 1 (8%)               |
| 18) Do you talk to your parents about SRE matters?                                  |                           |                    |                      |
| Yes   | 11 (92%)                  | No                 | 1 (8%)               |
| 19) If so, which parent do you talk to?   |                           |                    |                      |
| Mother  | Father                    | Neither            |                      |
| 7 (58%)   | 3 (25%)                   | 2 (17%)            |                      |
| 20) Do you feel comfortable talking to your parent(s) about sexual matters?         |                           |                    |                      |
| Yes   | 8 (67%)                   | No                 | 4 (33%)              |
| 21) Do you feel embarrassed talking to your parent(s) about sexual matters?         |                           |                    |                      |
| Yes   | 6 (58%)                   | No                 | 5 (42%)              |
| 22) Do you talk to your friends about sexual matters?                               |                           |                    |                      |
| Yes   | 10 (83%)                  | No                 | 2 (17%)              |
| 23) If yes, what do you and your friends talk about?                                |                           |                    |                      |
| Anything and Everything   | Talk about Sex in General | The Opposite Sex   |                      |
| 3 (30%)   | 3 (30%)                   | 4 (40%)            |                      |
| 24) Do many of your friends have boyfriends/girlfriends?                            |                           |                    |                      |
| Yes   | 11 (92%)                  | No                 | 1 (8%)               |
| 25) Do you have a boyfriend/girlfriend?   |                           |                    |                      |
| Yes   | 5 (42%)                   | No                 | 7 (58%)              |
| 26) Do you know if your friends talk to their boyfriend/girlfriend about sex?       |                           |                    |                      |
| Yes   | 8 (67%)                   | No                 | 3 (33%)              |
| 27) Do you talk to your boyfriend/girlfriend about sexual matters?                  |                           |                    |                      |
| Yes   | 4 (80%)                   | No                 | 1 (20%)              |
| 28) If yes, what sorts of things do you talk about?                                 |                           |                    |                      |
| Nothing Specific  | When to Have Sex          | Contraception      | Consequences of Sex  |
| 1 (20%)   | 1 (20%)                   | 1 (20%)            | 2 (40%)              |
| 29) Who do you prefer to talk to about sex overall?                                 |                           |                    |                      |
| Mother  | Friends                   | Father             | Boyfriend/Girlfriend |
| 5 (42%)   | 5 (42%)                   | 1 (8%)             | 1 (8%)               |
| 30) How important is it for school to provide you with SRE?                         |                           |                    |                      |
| Very Important  | Quite Important           | Not Very Important | Not Important at all |
| 7 (58%)   | 4 (33%)                   | 1 (9%)             | 0 ( %)               |
| 31) How would you rate the SRE that you have received at school?                    |                           |                    |                      |
| Very Good   | Good                      | Okay               | Poor                 |
| 1 (8%)  | 5 (42%)                   | 5 (42%)            | 1 (8%)               |

<sup>a</sup> Percentages have been rounded up and therefore do not equal to 100% exactly

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# **Appurtenances to Accompany the PhD**

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**INSERT 1 - TRANSCRIPTION OF THE SENSE MULTIMEDIA PROGRAM  
(Sex & Relationships CD-ROM for 14 to 16 year olds)**

**INSERT 2 - TRANSCRIPTIONS OF FAMILY INTERVIEW – STUDY I**

**INSERT 3 - TRANSCRIPTIONS OF FAMILY INTERVIEW – STUDY II**

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## **Insert 1**

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### **TRANSCRIPTION OF THE SENSE MULTIMEDIA PROGRAM (Sex & Relationships CD-ROM for 14 to 16 year olds)**

The Sense CD-ROM starts with trendy upbeat music, like young people would listen to. A standard page is displayed to state the terms and conditions of the CD-ROM, which requires the user to agree or disagree. The main page then highlights the words Changes, Feelings, Choices, Decisions, Information, Physical changes, Relationships, Sexual health, Sexuality and Sex. These move out of the screen towards you. You can skip the introduction or hear the following information. The screen is made up of purple, pink and blue neon lighting (Modern) A happy sounding male then gives the following information.

*“Hi, glad you could make it! Just a few things about this CD-ROM before you start to explore. OK, this CD-ROM is not an instruction manual; it is about sex, relationships and sexual health. Most importantly it is about you, how you’re body and your feelings maybe changing and how to manage those changes. It’s packed with really good information, young people like you have said they need, and all too often can’t get hold of, stuff that will help you, and give you the confidence to make your own choices and decisions and we are also going have some fun along the way. People grow-up in all sorts of families, two parents, one parent, foster parents, carers, two mums or dads. Whoever you live with this CD-ROM is for you and will help you talk about the issues that it raises. Here is a quick demo to help you find your way around the onscreen console. You can click this ‘Buzzwords’ tab at any time. You will see a list of key words, which you scroll through using the up and down arrows. Once you have found the word you are looking for just click onto it to find out more. A text panel will open, which you can print out for future reference. To close the panel click on the ‘X’ button, to close buzzwords just click on the tab. Whatever section you are in the ‘I’ button can provide you with important, additional information, click on it and you will see a drop-down directory of relevant organisations, useful telephone numbers, cool web sites and other details. This text can also be scrolled through and printed. When the green button (top right hand side of the screen) is highlighted, it means that either you must click to continue or you have the option of moving forward. The arrow (button at the bottom right hand side of the screen) will be highlighted in red when you can go backwards. Click on the pause button (top right hand side of the screen above the green button), it will flash to confirm the CD-ROM has been paused, to continue the CD-ROM simply click on the ‘pause’ button again. To quit the CD-ROM at any time just hit the ‘Exit’ button (bottom right hand side of the screen, below the arrow button). Now it is time to meet the gang – Will, Reena, Maria, Tim, Harriot, Steve, DJ, Jane and Pete, oh and not forgetting ‘Fly’. When they all appear on the screen scroll over each person to find out who they are. Follow them through the different sections of the CD-ROM as they deal with situations and emotional issues many real people experience in everyday life. By the way make sure you run through the sections in order, even though it maybe tempting not to, you will see why soon enough. Enough from me, it will soon make perfect ‘SENSE’.”*

## **NEXT**

- A male walks from the right hand side of bouncing a football and he loses control of the ball when he looks up to see a girl who enters from the left hand side of the screen (he smiles at her and blushes, indicating that he is attracted to her).



- All the gang mentioned previously show up on the screen. A fly also emerges from the top left hand side button. You can click on each one to find out who they are.

Starting from right to left (order in which they emerged on the screen) there is;

**PETE** – He is described as *‘Confident and is best friends with Tim’*.

**STEVE** – He is described as *‘Very clever and is Harriot’s best friend’*.

**TIM** – He is described as *‘Popular and good looking and is best friends with Pete’* (Disabled and is in a wheel chair).

**DJ** – He is described as *‘Cool and streetwise’* (coloured).

**WILL** – He is described as *‘In love and fancies Reena and hasn’t a clue what to do about it and is great friends with Maria’* (Male symbol on his t-shirt).

**REENA** – She is described as being *‘Best friends with Jane and she knows Will fancies her’* (female symbol on her t-shirt).

**MARIA** – She is described as being *‘Confident and is really good friends with Will’*.

**JANE** – She is described, as being *‘Very confident is best friends with Reena’*.

**HARRIOT**– She is described as being *‘Very shy and is best friends with Steve’*.

**FLY** – states *“He has seen it all before and is on hand to offer help and advice”*.

Note - Characters are all dressed in modern, casual clothes that teenagers would normally wear. All male characters are quite lean in statue and all girls, except for Maria are very thin.

You then press the flashing green button and a bell rings as all the characters move from the screen, except for Harriot who presses each of the button on the left hand side of the screen. When doing this the

RED BUTTON refers to **‘Sexuality and sexual feelings’**

PINK BUTTON refers to **‘Relationships’**

BLUE BUTTON refers to **‘Virtual clinic’**

GREEN BUTTON refers to **‘Sex’**

ORANGE BUTTON refers to **‘True or false’**

YELLOW BUTTON (I) refers to **‘Help and advice’**

At the top it has *‘Buzzwords’*. You can click on each of these individually or select one and print it out. All the buzzwords are then printed in alphabetical order (please see reference 1 at the end of this appurtenance).

## **STEP BY STEP STAGES OF THE CATEGORIES WITHIN THE CD-ROM**

### **1<sup>st</sup> Section - ‘Sexuality and Sexual Feelings’.**

Under this section there are three choices; Part 1 - ***Know your body***, Part 2 - ***Sexual attraction*** and Part 3 - ***Sexual fantasies***.

## **Part 1 - 'Know your body'.**

Reena and Will appear and you then need to choose one.

### **REENA**

A picture of Reena appears in a picture of a real teenage bedroom. A female voice then says, *"Between the ages of 10 and 12 girls start to experience changes in their body and in their minds too. These are some of the signs – Girls tend to start puberty a bit earlier than boys. Their breasts begin to grow, they develop pubic hair and hair under their arms and their periods can also start around this time"*. Use the magnify glass to find and view the crosses.

- The red crosses on Reenas body are not very noticeable.
- Initially it is difficult to manoeuvre the magnify glass to reach the areas on the body.
- At the top of the screen in the centre there is a label, which says 'Reena 10-12 years'. This has five red crosses below the label, which turn green when you have found and viewed each of the crosses on Reenas body, however it is not made clear as to the purpose of the crosses and how they will change colour.
- A beeping noise continues until you click on the crosses (this can be a bit annoying).

### **Cross on the head - Feelings**

A female voice says, *"At this age girls often feel self conscious and even a little embarrassed. They are aware their bodies are changing; some wonder why their body is changing more than their friends. It is quite normal to feel a bit confused"*. A page then appears entitled 'Common thoughts and feelings'. Below the title the following questions appear. Why do I feel people are always looking at me? Why do I get embarrassed? Why are my breasts hurting? What if my periods start at school? Should I use tampons or sanitary towels? What are people thinking at my age?"

### **Cross on the chest - Breasts**

A female voice say's, *"Breasts often begin to grow before a girl starts her period. Usually the nipples get bigger and darker and then the breasts start to fill out. They are often quite sensitive as they develop and may feel tender or tingly. Breasts grow at different rates and sometimes one may grow faster than the other. This is quite normal and eventually they will even out although most women normally have one breast bigger than the other. As the breasts develop many girls start to wear a bra for support and protection"*.

### **Cross on the armpits – Body hair**

A female voice says, *" Many girls start to develop pubic hair and underarm hair about now. Slightly thicker and darker hair may grow on other parts of the body including legs and sometimes on the face. Some people use creams, waxing or shaving to remove some hair, whilst others are happy to leave it. Try different methods until you find out what suits you and talk to somebody you trust for help and advice"*.

### **Cross on the stomach - Periods**

A female voice say's, *"Periods start anywhere between 7 and 17 years old. Most girls' start somewhere in the middle. A period is when a small amount of fluid, including blood is passed out of the vagina after the lining of the womb has broken down. Most women*

*have a period every month with the average time between the first day of one period and the first day of the next period being about 28 days, however anywhere between 21 and 35 days is quite normal. On average a period lasts anywhere between 3 and 7 days. Many girls experience irregular periods at first and sometimes they are accompanied by aches, pains, feeling down or moody and even stressed. For many girls their first period can be a little scary. Talking to a trusted adult can help”.*

#### **Cross on the pubic area - Vagina**

A female voice say's, *“All this activity is a sign that the ovaries are starting to release eggs. Ovaries are the female reproductive organs where female egg cells call ova are produced”.* Shows a good simplistic picture of the female reproductive organs.

#### **WILL**

A picture of Will appears in a picture of a real teenage bedroom. A male voice then says *“Between the ages of 10 and 12 boys start to experience some pretty big changes in their bodies, and in their minds too. Boys start puberty a bit later than girls, normally between the ages of 8 and 13”.* Use the magnify glass to find and view the crosses.

Note - It is the same system as for Reena. You have five crosses and you need to click on them to get information and change the red crosses to green.

#### **Cross on the head - Feelings**

A male voice say's, *“Puberty can be a confusing time. Some boys show the signs of growing more than others. Some may have more hair on their arms or just grow bigger and taller earlier or quicker”.* A page follows entitled 'Common thoughts' with the following questions. 'Who can I ask for help? Why don't I have any pubic hair yet? Am I a man now? Am I grown up? What does that mean exactly? Why isn't my body changing quicker? Why can't I be bigger/taller?

#### **Cross on the Throat - Voice**

A male voice say's, *“Most men remember when their voice started to break. It takes on a life of its own, often switching from high to low in the same sentence, which can be a little weird and embarrassing”.*

#### **Cross on the armpit – Body hair**

A male voice say's, *“Some boys begin to grow thicker, darker body hair. The first signs of hair are usually under the arms, above the upper lip, on the legs and arms, around the pubic area and sometimes on the chest”.*

#### **Cross on the pubic area - Testes**

A male voice say's, *“The testes or testicles are the two male sex organs, which produce sperm and a male sex hormone. They hang in a soft bag of skin called the scrotum. One testicle usually hangs lower than the other. This is quite normal and stops them from hitting on each other. Spots, moles and bumps are quite common on testicles, but it is important for you to check them regularly for any lumps or bumps that may appear. If you do find anything different or unusual you should go and see your doctor. It is also important to check your chest and nipples for any unusual changes”.* Shows a good simplistic picture of the male reproductive organs.

### **Cross on the knee – Arms and legs**

A male voice say's, *"During puberty there are sudden surges of growth in legs, arms and chest. These growing spurts can often cause aches and pains in the arms and legs, whilst making you feel clumsy. This is because some parts of the body for example your feet are growing quicker than others"*.

### **Overall comments on the Sexuality and sexual feelings: Know your body.**

If you click on a particular cross, for example the stomach, you have to listen to the whole description of that part of the body. If you were to close the stomach section and attempt to open up say the head section, the information from the stomach is then given again. Although you are able to close a section if you do not wish to listen to the information, you are not able to go to another part of the body without the information being duplicated again. This is maybe what was meant by the gentleman in the introduction who said you needed to *'go through each section in order'*.

In the *'feelings'* section of Reena and Will, it would have been useful if you could click on the questions at the end of the dialogue in order to get advice and information about the questions being asked.

At the different stages of this section, the 'I' button appears. 'I' gives the same information whether you click on Reena or Will. Different information is not given for each sex (please see reference 2 at the end of this appurtenance).

### **Part 2 - 'Sexual attraction'**

FLY appears, burps and says,

*"Oh, I knew I shouldn't have had those last few cheese burgers left overs, but then what are parties for if not for over indulging. Hi, let me introduce myself, I am what you and ever other human in the world would give anything to be sometime in their lives. Yes, I am the fly on the wall and oh my could I tell you some juicy stories. Come on be honest how many times do you really wish you could be me? Ok, tonight is a very special night; it is Karen's birthday party. Everyone is having a good time, the lights are low, the mood is hot and love is in the air. As I speak they are chatting each other up, having a laugh with their friends and enjoying themselves, who are they? Follow me... Ok click on one of the couples and let's see what happens"*. (Three different pairs of people to choose from; two where one boy and girl appear and one where two boys appear).

### **Click on couple one – Reena & Will.**

Will is saying to himself, *'Come on you can do this, it is now or never Will, you just have to go for it, be interesting, look interested, listen to her, they like that and for god sake don't stare at her boobs'*. (A bubble appears from Wills head saying *'Phew she looks gorgeous tonight'*).

The conversation starts;

**WILL** - *Hi are you all right? You are looking really nice tonight; I always thought you should be a model. (Bubble from Reena saying 'Give him another chance, he is quite cute').*

**REENA** - *I doubt that, but thanks anyway. (Bubble from Reenas head saying 'Wow, what a complement').*

**WILL** - *I love this record don't you? I first heard it when I was in Greece on holiday. (Bubble from Reena saying 'Great line Will, keep it going and you are in there').*

**WILL** - *Wow, me too. I went to Greece last year, it was brill. You should have seen the birds, I mean girls on the beach. (Bubble from Reena – 'Oh dear just when I thought he was really interested in me'). (Bubble from Will – 'I bet she looks great in a bikini on the beach, the lads would be so jealous'). I went with my parents, but next time I am going to go with my mates. We are going to go somewhere really cool and party big time. We are going to hit those bars and clubs and get wasted every night. (Bubble from Reena – 'Someone please help me').*

**REENA** – *"Oh hi Chris, getting some drinks? I will give you a hand. Catch you late Will, yeah?" (Bubble from Will – 'What did I do wrong?')*

Fly then says, *"I think this guy is in some real need of help. Time to get bis, bis, busy".*

**FLY** – *Hey you, over here on you bottle of coke mate. Don't even think about it, first you are not quick enough and second I am here to help you with that girl you were just talking to, sorry talking at.*

**WILL** – *Yeah, but you are a fly.*

**FLY** – *Ten out of ten for observation, do you want my advice or not?*

**WILL** – *Okay.*

**FLY** – *Good, lets go. I will be Reena. Here is some advice from a fly who has seen it all before. Think about your opening line before you make your move. I know you think she is attractive, but please, please, please do not stare at her breasts; show some respect. I heard you syke yourself up to go any talk to her and you were so right, I heard you say 'be interesting' and you were so right, but you just didn't show any interest in her at all. It is not just about chatting her up, it is about finding out if you have anything in common. OK, lets do it. So how are you going to start?*

**WILL** – *Hi, all right?*

**FLY** – *No, no. How about Hi, great party isn't it?*

**WILL** – *Yeah, sounds good.*

**FLY** – *Go on then.*

**WILL** – *Him great party isn't it? I have seen you around school, but we have never met properly. I am Will.*

**FLY** – *Hi Will, yeah I have seen you around to. I love this record, don't you? I first heard it when I was on holiday.*

**WILL** – *You are looking really great tonight. I have always thought you should be a model.*

**FLY** – *Hold it, stop right there. What are you like? Why change the subject? She is giving you a clue about her taste in music. Why not ask her about that or her holiday? Don't you want to know if you have anything in common, rather than just an interest in her body?*

**WILL** – *Ok. Yeah it is a great record, where did you go on holiday?*

**FLY** – *Greece.*

**WILL** – *Me too. I went to Greece last year, it was brill. You should have seen the girls on the beach. I went with my parents, but next time I will go with my mates and we will go somewhere really cool.*

**FLY** – *No, stop. She doesn't want to know about your sordid holiday experiences past or future, interrupting her is not going to impress her. Show some interest in her, talk about music or what she enjoyed most about her holiday. Remember you know very little about her yet. Maybe you will have something in common, but maybe you won't like each other at all.*

**WILL** – *Yeah, you are right; I am going to try again.*

**FLY** – *Right who is going to be next? Click on one of the other couples and lets see what happens.*

#### **Clicked on couple number two – Maria & Jed (DJ's cousin)**

Fly appears and say's, *"Now there is a woman on a mission if I have ever seen one. Maria definitely has the hots for this guy".*

**MARIA** – *I love this record, don't you? (Bubble from Maria – I wish I was alone with him).*

**JED** – *It is ok. I take it you are into the slower stuff then? (Bubble from Jed – She seems cool).*

**MARIA** – *I have always liked smoochie stuff like this, it makes me feel all romantic and sort of gets me in the mood. (Bubble from Maria – 'He seems a bit jumpy, don't scare him off').*

**JED** – *Yeah. Guess so. (Bubble from Jed – 'She seems a bit keen').*

**MARIA** – *Shall we dance then?*

**JED** – *Yes, sure.*

#### **START DANCING**

(Maria strokes Jeds bum. Bubble from Maria – *'Nice bum'*).

(Bubble from Jed – *'She is either very keen or after my money. The woman is a man-eater'*).

Jed say's: *"Nature calls, its all that drink"* and then leaves.

Fly appears and say's, *"Here we go again. Time to get bis, bis, busy. Yoo-hoo, don't worry; I am sure he will be back"*.

**FLY** – *Never mind that. Listen we have a bit of time before he comes back. You need some help.*

**MARIA** – *Listen, I may have snogged some interesting guys in my time, but I have never stooped as low as a fly.*

**FLY** – *Hey watch your step, I am not that sort of fly and you are not my type anyway. Look you are coming on too strong with him, too soon. He is not sure how to handle it. Have you not heard of body language?*

**MARIA** – *What do you mean?*

**FLY** – *Over 50% of communication is non-verbal. In other words, you body is doing a lot of the talking for you, even if you are not aware of it.*

**MARIA** – *So.*

**FLY** – *So, you are chatting away about music and then all of a sudden your hands are on his back pockets groping his bum. The signals you are sending are lets not talk, lets snog, so he is confused.*

**MARIA** – *So am I.*

**FLY** – *Have you thought about what he might be feeling or what he wants? What was his body language saying to you? Remember you noticed it you thought he was jumpy.*

**MARIA** – *Yes, I did.*

**FLY** – *I am not saying you shouldn't snog the guy, just make sure you choose the right moment and take more notice of his body language.*

**MARIA** – *Okay, I can do that. Wish me luck.*

### **Clicked on couple number three – Kurt and Steve**

Fly appears and say's, *"Ah, yes this is Kurt and Steve. They seem to be getting on well, but they have got more in common than they think. I have been keeping my large compound eyes on them. They both like each other, but both of them are nervous about making the first move. It looks like they need something to break the ice, lets eves drop for a while"*.

**KURT** – *Great party. Having a good time? (Bubble from Kurt – your cute).*

**STEVE** – *Yes. Brilliant, how about you? (Bubble from Steve – I really fancy this guy).*

**KURT** – *Really enjoying myself. Seems like a good crowd, so did you come with anyone? (Bubble from Kurt – 'I wonder if he is gay, how can I find out, maybe I should ask his friends').*

**STEVE** – *No I am here by myself tonight. And you? (Bubble from Steve – 'Is he trying to find out if I am available or if I am straight, or maybe he is just being friendly').*

**KURT** – *Looks like you and I are the only singles here. (Bubble from Kurt – I think he is checking me out to see if I am available and if I am gay. What is I am completely wrong? )*

**STEVE** – *So have you got a girlfriend then?*

**KURT** – *No.*

*(Bubble from both Kurt & Steve – ‘I think he likes me, but I can’t be sure’).*

*(Bubble from Kurt – ‘He must be gay, mustn’t he? Maybe he is between girlfriends. What if he thinks I am gay and he is not, Help!’)*

Fly appears and say’s, *“Here we go again! Okay we are getting nowhere fast here”.*

*(Bubble from Kurt & Steve – ‘What a talking fly?’)*

**FLY** – *I know what you are thinking, just don’t say it. Okay Kurt, you like Steve, yes?*

**KURT** – *Yes.*

**FLY** – *Steve, you like Kurt, yes?*

**STEVE** – *Yes.*

**FLY** – *Yes and neither of you have the courage to say anything.*

**KURT & STEVE** – *Well, yes.*

**FLY** – *Well why?*

**KURT** – *Well it is not that easy if you are shy and it is even more difficult if you are gay as well.*

**STEVE** – *Too right, how can you tell if someone else is gay too?*

**KURT** – *Also what if you make the wrong assumptions and they turn out not to be gay after all? How will they react?*

**STEVE** – *Yes and they could be cool about it, but they may tell someone else who isn’t.*

**FLY** – *Okay, do you know people in here and how they will react?*

**STEVE** – *Well most of my mates are here tonight and they all know that I am gay.*

**KURT** – *My friend Sara is over there, she knows I am gay and she is really cool about it.*

**FLY** – *Okay, well life is too short to miss out on opportunities and if you didn’t hit it off tonight, I bet you would have gone home thinking why didn’t I say something.*

**KURT & STEVE** – *Well, yes.*

**FLY** – *So if you want something, go for it, even if you are on the shy side, it doesn’t mean you have to miss out.*

**STEVE** – *How do you mean?*

**FLY** – *Well you both have friends here, so get them to help. Steve, get your people over there to talk to Kurt’s people and get them to suss it out in a discrete way, of course, but at least you will find out if one or both of you like boys or girls or both if you get my drift.*



**STEVE** – *Never thought of that, but what if my mates came and said that Kurt likes girls, is there anywhere else where it is easy to meet other gay people?*

**FLY** – *Lots of them. A good place to start is youth groups in the area, and there is lots of help-lines you can ring and websites that can offer good advice.*

*Information comes up entitled 'Being gay' (please see reference 3 at the end of this appurtenance).*

### **Part 3 - 'Sexual fantasises'**

Fly appears and say's, *"We have seen what sexual attraction is all about; we have seen people flirting, we have seen people pulling, well almost, but believe you me the hottest action is going on where we can't see it; in people's heads and is happening whether they are awake day dreaming or fast asleep. Follow me..."*

**Screen appears showing a male in bed, fast asleep.**

**FLY** – *We all have sexy thoughts and feelings and they are called fantasies. They can be great, but for some reason a lot of people worry because they have these thoughts. They may feel guilty for having them or worry about what they mean, when in fact they are just that 'fantasy' and nothing real. You may think you are the only ones having them, take it from me most people have fantasies, including our friend Pete here. Okay,, Pete is dreaming. Lets see what's going on inside that head of his. So, Pete tell me have you been worrying about some of the thoughts you have been having lately?*

**PETE** – *Well yes and no, I mean I do enjoy sexy thoughts and fantasies and stuff, but sometimes I wonder what is happening in that crazy head of mine. Am I okay? Am I weird? I mean up until I was thirteen, all I use to think about was sport and fame, or food and back then my idea of having a wet dream was having fun in the swimming pool, but now all I seem to think about is women and especially boobs.*

**FLY** – *All perfectly normal. These sexual thoughts are just a sign that you are growing up. They start when your body starts to produce sexual chemicals, called hormones. Both men and women have these feelings.*

**PETE** – *Sometimes I have these thoughts and feelings when I see someone and other times they just pop into my head for no reason, at really odd times, like when talking to a teacher or queuing at the cinema. It is so embarrassing.*

**FLY** – *Again, quite natural.*

**PETE** – *Is it the same for girls. Do they have fantasies too? What do they think about?*

**FLY** – *Yes of course girls have fantasies and sexual thoughts too. They may fantasise about all sorts of things including boys of course, although not always to do with sex.*

**PETE** – *Last night I started thinking about another guy. Does this mean I am gay?*

**FLY** – *No, it doesn't necessarily. A lot of people have sexual feelings towards someone of the same sex as well as the opposite sex at sometime during their lives. It doesn't mean you are gay or bisexual, it just means your brain is trying to make sense of your developing sexuality.*

**PETE** – *When I have these thoughts I often get a stiffy too. It is like it has got a mind of its own. Erections are fine on their own, but they do have a habit of springing up on me at the wrong time and in all the wrong places.*

**FLY** – *Yes, that's one of the bad things about having a penis. It has no sense of timing or discretion. One minute it is behaving itself and the next minute there it is large as life and raring to go. You can always hide it by putting you hands in your pocket, wearing baggy jumpers or holding a coat or jacket in front of you. When people have sexual thoughts, young men often get an erection and young women's vaginas become moist and the clitoris more sensitive. Try thinking of something non-sexual for a while, it normally works.*

**PETE** – *Like maths.*

**FLY** – *Perfect.*

**PETE** – *Sometimes the thoughts I have are not about specific things, they can be about situations I would like to find myself in and they can last a long time, like a daydream. Other times I image myself being someone else.*

**FLY** – *Oh yes, what you are describing is a fantasy; stories we invent about things we like to do with people where we would like to do it with and places we like to do it. They can be about all sorts of people, perhaps someone we know well, or someone we don't know very well, but fancy like mad.*

**PETE** – *Oh, yeah.*

**FLY** – *Sometimes we have fantasies where we would like to have sex.*

**PETE** – *Oh, yeah. I have those too. Like the beach, fields.*

**FLY** – *Wherever, but the important thing is that fantasies are just that. They are just fantasises, everyone has different fantasies, yours are unique to you. They are fun because you can make up your own rules and control the outcome every time. You decide where your thoughts take you and who with, but of course real life is just not like that and as long as we know the difference between fantasy and reality, it is all totally harmless. Fantasies are the brains way of exploring what we like.*

**PETE** – *So tell me can these fantasies come into your head at any time of the day or night?*

**FLY** – *Oh, yes. Sometimes when we are not expecting them to and we would very much rather they didn't and sometimes when we actually plan to have them.*

**PETE** – *What do you mean?*

**FLY** – *Well Pete, how many times have you locked yourself in the bathroom when the last thing on your mind was having a bath or going to the toilet?*

**PETE** – *Oh yeah. Now I know where you are coming from.*

**FLY** – *Having these sexual thoughts and fantasies is really enjoyable, that's why most young people like to tough themselves; it is called...*

**PETE** – *Wanking!*

**FLY** – *Masturbation.*

**PETE** – *Someone at school told me that it is unhealthy or dangerous if you wank...masturbate too much.*

**FLY** – *Laughter. I am sure you will be delighted to know that it is no such thing, in fact it is perfectly normal, although some cultures do not allow masturbation, so Pete that the good news.*

**PETE** – *Thanks Fly, now buzz off and leave me to fantasise in peace.*

**FLY** – *Well, thank you very much too.*

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Section - 'Relationships'**

Under this section there are four choices; Part 1: ***Communication***, Part 2: ***How do I know if he/she fancies me?*** Part 3: ***How do I know when to have sex?*** and Part 4: ***Starting and ending a relationship.***

### **Part 1 – 'Communication'**

Pete and Tim appear and they have the following conversation.

**TIM** – *What was all that stuff you were saying about communication being so important?*

**PETE** – *Oh come on Tim if it is that important to you, I will buy you a new one.*

**TIM** – *That's not the point. Just forget it.*

**TIM LEAVES AND GOES TO TALK TO HARRIOT**

**HARRIOT** – *Tim, is everything okay?*

**TIM** – *Not really, me and Pete have just had a big argument.*

**HARRIOT** – *You and Pete are like brothers to one another, what happened?*

**TIM** – *I just lost it! I loaned him one of my CDs and he scratched it. Okay it is only a CD, but it was his attitude that really bugged me like he didn't care or it didn't matter. He knows it was my favourite CD and I just assumed he would take good care of it. It was not the damaged CD I was annoyed about, it was just so typical of his selfish attitude lately. He said it's my fault. He is never sure what I want or if he is doing the right thing because I don't tell him. Maybe he is right, maybe it is me. I didn't really give him a chance to explain, didn't want to listen to what he had to say, I blew it didn't I?*

**HARRIOT** – *Hey, don't be so hard on yourself. Even best friends fall out occasionally and it is usually all down to communication, or rather the lack of it.*

**TIM** – *Well, how do you mean?*

**HARRIOT** – *I mean you need to be clear about what you want and don't want from each other.*

**TIM** – *What?*

**HARRIOT** – *Don't be so vague. You need to tell him you expect him to take good care of your CDs and anything else you lent him and that goes for your relationship in general. In the future, you may argue about much more important things than a scratched*

*CD, so you have got to be sure he really understands what you and need in you friendship. That means you will have to talk it through with him, negotiate.*

**TIM** – *Yeah, you are right. He needs to understand how I feel, why I feel it and what I expect to be different.*

**HARRIOT** – *Yes, but you still have to see things from his side. Maybe he thinks you expect too much from him.*

**TIM** – *Well that is stupid, of course I don't.*

**HARRIOT** – *Have you told him that?*

**TIM** – *Well no, but ...*

**HARRIOT** – *He is not a mind-reader Tim. All I am saying is that in any friendship or relationship you have to be prepared to compromise, agree a way forward. Sure, always be yourself, express your own views and ideas, but always be prepared to listen, even though you might not like what you are hearing.*

**TIM** – *You are right Harriot, Thanks.*

**HARRIOT** – *No big deal, want a drink?*

**PETE APPEARS AND TIM AND PETE MAKE FRIENDS AGAIN.**

Fly then appears on the screen surrounded by a square. To the right of the square there is a green button, to the left of the square there is a yellow button and to the top of the square there is a blue button. When fly starts talking the green panel appears on the right hand side of the screen. It reads -

- Be clear about what you want
- Be specific about what you want
- Be prepared to negotiate
- Be prepared to compromise
- Agree a way forward
- Be yourself in a relationship
- Be prepared to listen

Fly then says, *“Okay, two key words on that panel. The first is negotiate. What do you mean but negotiate I hear you say. Okay here are my top tips for negotiation”.*

The yellow screen reads -

**Negotiation is...**

- Know what the bottom line is and stick to it
- State clearly what you would like best and what is acceptable to you
- Listen to other person position or requests
- Consider what you both agree with
- Don't rush and be pressured into a situation
- Come to an agreement
- Let the other person know you appreciate them being honest

Fly continues to say, *“Negotiating is about being prepared to compromise and to modify your behaviour so it is acceptable to both parties. For example if someone is racist, it may not be possible to change their feelings, but you can certainly ask them not to make racist comments in front of you. The other key word here is compromise”*.

The blue screen reads -

**Compromise is...**

- Be ready to compromise
- Know your bottom line
- Give and take
- Win some lose some
- You can't have it all your way, all of the time
- Have realistic expectations

Fly continues to say, *“What does it mean? It means knowing your bottom line and knowing what you are, and are not prepared to change. It's about trying to achieve a win, win situation for both parties. Being ready to compromise is very important in all relationships. It means give and take, but some people seem to want things all their own way, all of the time. They find it difficult to put the other person's needs before their own. What if you were in their shoes, what would you do? Finally if, and only if when you don't get your own way, there is no need to feel rejected, everything evens itself out in the end”*.

**Part 2 – ‘How do I know if he/she fancies me?’**

Maria and Will appear and they have the following conversation.

**JANE** – *Do you know if she fancies you?*

**WILL** – *I don't know, how can you tell?*

**JANE** – *Oh, Will you have a lot to learn. Have you caught her staring at you? Does she suddenly look away when your eye catches hers?*

**WILL** – *Well, yes.*

**JANE** – *Does she smile at you a lot? Laugh at your jokes? Does she make a point of being close to you? Maybe she teases you?*

**WILL** – *Yes, sometimes she will say something that makes me think she does fancy me and other times I am not so sure.*

**JANE** – *Will, I am sure she fancies you. She is sending out all the signals.*

**WILL** – *So, what do I do about it?*

**JANE** – *You let her know how you feel. You let her know that you fancy her. Maybe at the moment you are not getting that message across, maybe Reena is confused too.*

**WILL** – *So, how do I do that?*

**JANE** – *You tell her or at least ask her out.*

**WILL** – *Yeah, your right.*

**Two real ethic teenage girls then appear on the screen.**

**GIRL 1** – *What you have to do will is watch out for the body language.*

**WILL** – *Her what?*

**GIRL 1** – *Her body language. She may be telling you everything you need to know without even realising it. You can tell so much about what a person is thinking simply by looking at their facial expressions and body signals. Look watch us.*

**The two girls then engage in a role-play situation to illustrate body language.**

**GIRL 1** – *The girl is smiling, playing with her earrings and looking into the other girl's eyes.*

**JANE** – *This means she is interested, she is on your side, she wants to go along with you. These are very good signs because she is being very attentive. She is listening and you have her undivided attention.*

**GIRL 1** – *Starts to look away and watch other people in the room. She then picks up a magazine and looks at it whilst turning her body away and looking at anything else but the other girl who is part of the role-play.*

**MARIA** – *This is a bad news, she is ignoring you. You are either boring her or you have upset her in some way. You are getting all the signals that she is distracted by something or someone else. You haven't got eye contact and you can clearly tell her mind is clearly elsewhere. This means basically you can forget it, she is behaving rude and hasn't got the slightest interest in you. Do you get it Will?*

**WILL** – *Yes, that's useful stuff to know. Knowing my luck though she will probably not want to know.*

Fly then enters the screen and a blue panel appears which reads -

- Let them know you fancy them
- Watch their body language
- Learn to spot the signs of rejection and attraction
- What's the worst thing that could happen?

Fly then goes on to say, *"Okay, so watch out for signs that he/she is flirting with you. Watch out for their body language, it's a dead give away. If the signals are good, don't miss out by staying quiet; let them know how you feel about them. If the signals are bad, you have to spot them and deal with them. You may feel embarrassed and wonder what your friends might say, they might tease you about it, but don't let it get to you. Just because someone doesn't fancy you doesn't mean to say they think you are ugly and boring, maybe you are just not their type, maybe they are already going out with someone or they have someone else in mind. What's the worst thing that can happen? They might say 'no' but you can't let that affect you. You have just got to go for it, they can never say 'yes' if you don't ask. The key word is confidence. Confidence is knowing what is good about you and liking what is good about you. If you don't feel confident, that not only affects you, but the other person can sense it too. So here are some tips to try".*

A yellow screen appears and reads -

**To help you feel more confident...**

- Get advice and tips on how to deal with the situation
- Deal or rehearse before the event
- Get as much information you can about the person or the situation you feel nervous about
- Try deep breathing exercises
- Learn some relaxation techniques

Fly continues to say, *“Of course some people are not only unsure about what others think about them, they are not too sure how they feel themselves. Its like the age-old question, how do you know if you are falling in love? What are the signs? Well, I have been doing a bit of research in this one and these are just some of the responses I got”.*

A blue screen appears and reads -

**Falling in love...**

- You get butterflies
- You have a permanent grin
- You cant concentrate
- You cant stop thinking about him/her
- You make plans all of the time about seeing him/her
- You worry about what to wear
- You feel amazing

Fly continues to say, *“Other people describe it like being hit around the head with a brick, some say you can think of anyone or anything else, you day dream, you feel strange and preoccupied. Many people say you feel a bit sick and you don’t want to eat or you get so nervous you eat all the time or not at all. You get clumsy or you just can’t stop talking. You might worry about what to say or what he/she may say to you. The fact is that falling in love means different things to different people, but the chances are if and when it happens to you, you will know all about it. All right?”*

**Part 3 – ‘How do I know when to have sex?’**

DJ and his father are driving in a car and they have the following conversation.

**DJ** – Put your foot down dad, I am going to be late.

**FATHER** – It is better to get there late than not at all. PAUSE. Is everything okay? You seem really quiet and a bit touchy lately. Your mother and I are worried about you.

**DJ** – Dad, everything is cool. PAUSE. Well actually there is something wrong.

**FATHER** – Do you want to talk about it?

**DJ** – Okay, well it is kind of embarrassing. You know I have been seeing Claire for quite a while now?

**FATHER** – Yes.

**DJ** – *Well we have been messing around, well just kissing and stuff, nothing heavy but I don't know if sex is going to happen or what to do next. I think she wants to, but I am not a 100% sure and I don't know how to find out without making an idiot of myself. What do we do dad?*

**FATHER** – *Well maybe you want to ask your mother about this one.*

**DJ** – *I did and she said to ask you.*

**FATHER** – *Ah, okay well I guess talking is always good. I think you need to pluck up the courage to talk to Claire about this one. It is a major step in your relationship. You need to ask her what she really wants and how she feels about it and you need to tell her the same. Just be honest with each other, talking through things will really help.*

**DJ** – *I am getting some stick from the other guys at school asking me if I have done it yet?*

**FATHER** – *It is really hard, but try to ignore them. Whatever you do don't feel pressured into having sex by your mates. Take it from me, many of those guys will say they have had sex, but I bet the majority of them haven't. Do it when you're ready, not when someone else wants you to. It is also a bad idea to have sex after drinking too much. One or two drinks might make you feel more confident, but whatever you do make sure you have a pretty clear head, especially when it is your first time. There are a lot of important things you need to think about before having sex.*

**DJ** – *You mean like condoms?*

**FATHER** – *Exactly. Talk to Claire about, well she might want to use some other type of contraception, but it makes sense to use a condom as well just to make sure you protect yourselves against diseases as well as pregnancy. Getting some advice about safer sex is always a good idea.*

**DJ** – *Thanks for the lift dad and thanks for the advice.*

**FATHER** – *I think it is always important to talk about this before doing it, rather than after. I am please I have been able to help and I am glad you feel you could talk to me about this. See you later.*

Fly then appears and displays a yellow panel which reads,

- Parents/carers
- Brothers, sisters, cousins and other relatives
- Friends
- Friends parents
- Teacher/nurse/staff in school
- Counsellor
- Connexions advisors or learning mentor

*Fly then says, "So if you feel you can talk to your parents or another member of your family and they are not too embarrassed to talk to you, great. Some people do find it very difficult to talk about sex. Families are all different; relationships within families are different too. You may be able to talk to some members of your family more easily than*



*others. Some of you may feel you want to talk to people nearer your own age, whoever you talk to make sure they really know what they are talking about and can offer you accurate help and advice. Choose your advisors carefully, maybe a member of staff at your school can help or perhaps you can talk to a youth worker or counsellor for support and advice. You might want to ask about confidentiality, it is not always possible for people to agree that what you say will be in confidence, so check first. The important thing to remember there is always people around for you to talk to”.*

**Part 4 – ‘Starting and ending a relationship?’**

Jane and Reena are accompanied by one male and two females’ actors to give advice on a relationship break-up.

**REENA** – *The fact is he never had to leave town because of his dad’s job, he just dumped me because he found someone else. I couldn’t believe it, I just didn’t see it coming Jane. It has really helped talking to you about it though. I feel a bit better, I just can’t help sometimes thinking of him.*

**FEMALE 1** – *I know what you mean about not seeing it coming. I remember when Debbie and I broke-up, I was devastated. She was my first real relationship and at first she was so caring and understanding. When I looked back all the signs were there to say there was something wrong. We would argue all the time over the most stupid little things, she would cut our conversation short, avoid me, there were always excuses why she couldn’t come and see me.*

**REENA** – *Yes, you are right. At the time I just thought he was stressed out through homework or exams, maybe getting a hard time off his parents for always being out with me too much, I was so naïve. How could I ever miss so noticeable signs?*

**GIRL 1** – *Don’t be hard on yourself Reena. Sometimes we deny when things are bad, even when the truth is right in front of our eyes.*

**MALE 1** – *That is so true. My parents haven’t been getting on for years. I could see the warning signs, hear the alarm bells even if they couldn’t. They just seem to ignore everything that happens in their relationship. In the end it was pretty obvious they were going to separate.*

**FEMALE 2** – *The important thing is Reena that time will heal. You may be feeling low right now, feel that you are not going to get over him or that you won’t be able to trust anyone else, but you will because you must.*

A green panel appears reads;

- Trust develops over time, its about
- Honouring agreements
- Being reliable
- Being honest
- Being clear about things (e.g. changing or cancelling arrangements)
- Admitting you mistakes, forgiving and being forgiven.

Fly then appears on the screen and says, *“Trust is a major part of any relationship, especially so when you are making important decisions. Trust needs to be earned and developed over time and it can even be lost. Sometimes people do things that hurt you,*

*which means you might find it difficult to trust other people. Learning to trust people again when you have been let down or hurt is difficult, but it is possible providing they show you the respect that you deserve and that you are happy with this. Next time watch what the person does as well as listening to what they say. Actions speak louder than words and think about what evidence you have that this person cares for you and can be relied upon. Being trustworthy is about being all of these things and life goes on. There are plenty more guys out there that will be queuing up to take you ex.'s place".*

**Back to the conversation taking place between the group on starting and ending a relationship.**

**JANE** - *I can certainly think of at least one.*

**REENA** – *Sorry.*

**JANE** – *Oh nothing. You know that we are always here for you, when you are feeling down, all you have to do is pick up the phone.*

**MALE 1** – *Even if you don't want to speak to one of us, you see a school counsellor and they maybe able to offer some advice as well as how to get through this. Have you spoke to your mum about this?*

**REENA** – *Yes, but only last night. She said we can talk about it. She said the last thing I need to do is rebound into a new relationship just for the sake of it.*

**FEMALE 2** – *That really good advice. Anyway Reena you will probably recognise the warning signs and try to avoid making the same mistake in the future.*

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Section – ‘Virtual Clinic’**

*A female voice say's, "Some young people think going to a clinic is embarrassing or scary, particular the first time, however when they get there they normally find it is nothing to be embarrassed or frightened about and people who work there are friendly and helpful. There are lots of fears and worries about what it will be like and what questions will be asked. Welcome to the virtual clinic where many of these questions will be answered".*

**Maria, Jane and Tim then appear on the screen and have the following conversation.**

**TIM** – *Everything okay Maria?*

**MARIA** – *Actually, no. I need to tell you two (Jane & Tim) about something.*

**JANE** – *What is it Maria?*

**MARIA** – *I think I should go to this clinic. I think I might be pregnant.*

**TIM** – *What? How? I mean when? With who?*

**MARIA** – *It was at that party on Saturday night.*

**JANE** – *With Jes?*

**MARIA** – *Yes, we did it. We used a condom, but I am not sure if we used it properly. I still can't believe it, I am okay, I think. What has happened has happened, but I don't really know how to deal with it. Could you two do me a big favour?*

**JANE** – *Anything, just ask.*

**MARIA** – *Will you come to the clinic with me? I am scared about going, especially by myself. I mean what will they say to someone under sixteen asking for emergency contraception?*

**JANE** – *Of course we will go with you.*

**TIM** – *Of course we will, don't worry about your age. You do not need to worry about that, okay? This poster says, "The sexual health clinic welcomes young men and women, gay or straight, including young people under sixteen for advice, information and contraception, including condoms". See it will be fine.*

A page then appears with many options; Part 1 – a) **Maria and Jane and Pete and Tim**, Part 2 - **Pregnancy and abortion**, Part 3 **Contraception**, Part 4 - **Sexually transmitted infections**, Part 5 - **Frequently asked questions**.

#### **Part 1 – 'Maria and Jane and Pete and Tim'**

A female voice says, *"Welcome to the virtual clinic, please take a seat. Have you got an appointment?"*

**MARIA** – No.

Female voice say's, *"That's fine, the nurse will see you in a moment. I just need to take some details from you first. Could you fill out one of the forms on the information desk please? Don't worry we just need your name (it doesn't have to be real), address, date of birth and the name of your GP. Everything you tell us is strictly confidential and we are not allowed to tell anyone you have come here"*.

Text – In a moment the waiting room will appear, please click on either Maria/Jane or Tim/Pete.

#### **Part 1a – 'Maria and Jane'**

**RECEPTIONIST** - *Okay Maria, the nurse will see you now.*

**MARIA** – *Is it okay if my friend comes in with me?*

**RECEPTIONIST** – *Yes, of course.*

**NURSE** – *Hello girls, please take a seat. Now, who is who?*

**MARIA** – *I am Maria and this is my friend, Jane.*

**NURSE** – *Now there is no need to be nervous, I am here to help you. Everything you say is confidential, however if I do feel I need to tell someone then I won't do anything without talking to you first. Now, what can I do for you Maria?*

**MARIA** – *Well, I need emergency contraception.*

**NURSE** – *Okay would you like to tell me what happened?*

**MARIA** – *I had sex on Saturday night when I was a bit tipsy and I am not sure we used the condom right.*

**NURSE** – *When used properly condoms are a very safe form of contraception. Do you remember what time you actually had sex?*

**MARIA** – *About 11pm, I think.*

**NURSE** – *That's good, that is within the 72-hour limit. If you need emergency contraception, the sooner the better. Emergency contraception can only be taken up to 72 hours, that 3 days after having unprotected sex. In extreme circumstances an intra-uterine device (coil) or IUD can be fitted up to five days after having unprotected sex, but you won't be needing that. It is always useful if you can remember the last date of your period. Women are much more fertile in the middle of their cycle, so finding the day in your cycle when you had unprotected sex can give us a good indication of the risk of pregnancy. As with any other pill you are prescribed, the emergency contraception pill comes with full instructions on how to take them and any side effects there may be. You will find an information leaflet inside the pack, but if you have any other questions at all don't hesitate to ask. You need to take one pill now and the other in 12 hours time. You might experience a few side effects such as nausea or feeling sick. If you are sick within two hours of taking either tablet, you must come back because you will need to take another one. Please do come back if you have any questions or your period is late, or if you are worried.*

**MARIA** – *Yes, I will thanks. You really won't tell my parents will you?*

**NURSE** – *No, not at all, but do you think you might be able to talk to them about it? You may find it helps. Although it can be really embarrassing and a bit scary, most young people find that their parents are supportive and helpful.*

**MARIA** – *I could maybe tell my mum, but I would be really nervous.*

**NURSE** – *Would you like to practice what you are going to say?*

**MARIA** – *No, its okay thanks I will just talk to Jane.*

**NURSE** – *That's fine. Well have you thought about further contraception?*

**MARIA** – *No need, we are not planning on having sex again yet.*

**NURSE** – *Here is a leaflet anyway. It tells you many things you need to know about contraception, but if you have any questions you can always come back and see me and remember your boyfriend.*

**MARIA** – *Jes.*

**NURSE** – *Jes is welcome too, either for free condoms or just for a chat.*

### **Part 1b – 'Tim and Pete'**

*At the clinic...*

**FEMALE VOICE** – *Hi, how can I help you?*

**TIM** – *Yes, hi. I have come for some condoms.*

**FEMALE VOICE** – *Have you been here before or is this your first time?*

**TIM** – *No, I was here about a month ago. I saw the nurse and she explained everyone has to see her on their first visit, so she can demonstrate how to use condoms properly.*

**FEMALE VOICE** – *That's good. Have you got your card?*

**TIM** – *Yes, here you go.*

**FEMALE VOICE** – *Thank you, Tim. Here you go.*

**TIM** – *Thanks, they are free, right?*

**FEMALE VOICE** – *Yes, they are. Here is your card back and we will see you next time. Bye.*

**TIM** – *Bye.*

### **Part 2 – 'Pregnancy and abortion'**

A female says, "*If you think you may be pregnant, the young person's clinic or the family planning clinic can give you a pregnancy test*". Able to print out information entitled '*I think I may be pregnant*' (please see reference 4 at the end of this appurtenance).

### **Part 3 – 'Contraception'**

A female says, "*You can get advice on and supplies of a varying range of contraceptives from young persons clinics and the family planning clinic. Here are just a few examples of the different contraceptives*". It lists the contraceptives and gives a description of each in a print format (please see reference 5 at the end of this appurtenance).

### **Part 4 – 'Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)'**

A female says, "*Some people think that catching a STI is dirty or something you can only get if you have sex with a lot of different people. In most cases it is just carelessness or bad luck. The most important thing to remember is that most STIs are completely curable. Make sure you get checked out and treated as soon as possible. Bear in mind that some STIs are not always detected, as they show no obvious signs or symptoms. If you think you maybe at risk, you should seek advice. Remember you do not have to be over sixteen to go to your GP or a clinic*". It then gives you information on STIs in a print format (please see reference 6 at the end of this appurtenance).

### **Part 5 – 'Frequently asked questions'**

The questions are displayed and are as follows:

#### **What kind of advice can the clinic offer?**

*At young people's clinics you can get advice and guidance on a wide range of matters, including sex, sexuality, partner problems, periods, puberty, erection problems, painful sex and discharge. You don't have to have sex to go to the clinic. Many people go for non-sexual matters such as friendship problems, school, parents, spots and body image.*

**Do I have to have had sex to attend the clinic?**

*Many young people attend the clinic for advice on contraception before having sex for the first time or just to talk to someone. We really like it when people come to see us before they have sex, it helps them to prepare and decide what is best for them.*

**Do the clinics also offer advice and counselling on non-sexual matters?**

*You can call in for help and advice on lots of other issues that may be worrying you such as friendship problems, girlfriends or boyfriends, school, bullying, parents, love, spots and body image. You don't have to have had sex to go.*

**Do I have to be sixteen to go to the clinic?**

*Even if you are under sixteen you are entitled to free, confidential help and support.*

**Can I go with a friend?**

*You can go by yourself, with your partner, with a friend, or friends, or with an adult. You have to give your permission for them to come and see the nurse or doctor with you.*

**Do you tell my parents I have been here?**

*All visits are completely confidential. We don't tell anyone, that's against the law. We will encourage you however to talk to someone you can trust.*

**When do you break confidentiality?**

*We would only consider breaking confidentiality if we feel someone is in danger or at risk. This is always discussed with you first.*

**Do I have to have an examination?**

*Sometimes a family planning clinic may take the blood pressure and weight of someone requesting hormonal emergency contraception. If you want to be fitted with a coil rather than take the morning after pill, that would require an internal examination.*

**Where do I get tested if I think I have an STI, here or somewhere else?**

*Some young people's clinics and GPs do tests, most of whom you would go to a GUM clinic. There are also some sexual health clinics and family planning clinics that will test for some STIs.*

**Can boys get free condoms?**

*Boys and girls can get free condoms.*

**Can I get emergency contraception for my girlfriend?**

*The only person who can get emergency contraception is the person who needs it.*

**Are there different sorts of emergency contraception?**

*The most common form of emergency contraception is the morning after pill, however there are others.*

**Are clinics open all day?**

*Opening times of clinics vary, so it is always best to go and check. Remember you can always check the opening times on the 'areyouthinking' website.*

**Can I see a man or a woman?**

*Clinics vary. If you specifically want to see a male or a female, it is always best to call in advance and ask who is available.*

**Do I have to tell the receptionist who I am?**

*The receptionist will ask you your name, date of birth, address and who your GP is or you will be given a form to fill in with this information on it. You don't have to give your real name if you don't want to. Your GP will not be contacted without your permission.*

**Will anything get sent to my home?**

*We have to ask your permission before we send you any correspondence at all.*

**Can gay people go to the clinic?**

*Both gay and straight people are welcome at any clinic.*

**Where else can I go to, to get help and advice?**

*Besides young peoples clinics there are lots of other excellent sources offering help and advice. These days' people in all support organisations are well trained and are generally helpful, kind and understanding. Press the information button on your console for a list of useful organisations and don't forget the school nurse or Connexions personal advisor are a useful source of information and can tell you where the nearest clinic is. The most important thing to remember is that there are lots of places you can go to for help and advice on sexual matters or any other concerns that you may have. They are all there to help you, so please do use them.*

**4<sup>th</sup> Section – 'SEX'**

There are five different sections to this part of the CD-ROM; Part 1 - **Talking about sex and choices**, Part 2 - **Sex – and what it feels like**, Part 3 - **Unwanted touching, sexual abuse and rape**, Part 4 – **Sex and the law** and Part 5 - **Safer sex**.

**Part 1 – 'Talking about sex and choices'**

Two real male and female characters accompany Will and Reena to discuss the topic.

**MALE 1** – *So Will, how long have you been going out with Reena?*

**WILL** – *Not very long.*

**MALE 1** – *So have you done it yet then?*

**WILL** – *Not yet, but we both know we want to have sex eventually, but only when it feels right. (Bubble appears from Will saying 'I am scared, what if I can't get the condom on properly? What if I cum too soon?')*

**MALE 2** – *It always feels right to me.*

**FEMALE 1** – *Leave him alone, its Will and Reenas choice when to have sex, nobody else's. Take no notice Will, you should never feel pressured into having sex.*

**MARIA** – *But what exactly do you mean by sex, Will?*

**WILL** – *Well you know, doing it.*

**MARIA** – *Doing what? Oral sex, vaginal sex, anal sex. Have you talked to Reena about what she means by sex? You both have to be very clear with each other about what you want to do and how far you go. Trust me, I know.*

**WILL** – *Sounds scary. Will she expect me to do them all? She just says she wants to make love, but I am not sure what that means.*

**MALE 2** – *Making love and having sex is about being respectful, attentive and appreciative, caring about what happens to the other person.*

**FEMALE 2** – *Absolutely. It's about checking what the other person wants, watching and sensing your partner's response.*

**MALE 1** – *Well surely it's about having a good time, about having fun.*

**FEMALE 2** – *Yes of course it is, but it is important to work things out together and talk about you both having fun.*

**FEMALE 1** – *I know exactly what Lucy's saying. It is so important to talk to one another.*

**WILL** – *What do you mean?*

**FEMALE 1** – *I mean asking the other person what they like, or just gradually trying something out and asking whether your boyfriend or girlfriend like it or not? Not just going for it like mad.*

**FEMALE 2** – *No one should assume, boy or girl that just because they like doing something, the other person will like it too.*

**MALE 1** – *People should talk about their feelings for each other. So many people find it hard to express their feelings. I mean asking the other what they like, you can't just do it without thinking about the other person, can you?*

**MALE 2** – *People should also talk about what they like about each other.*

**FEMALE 2** – *Too true, you need to tell them what you like about them and their body.*

**MALE 2** – *Yes, I understand that. Sex is about giving and receiving pleasure and about showing each other that you care and respect each other.*

**FEMALE 2** – *Of course, everybody likes to be stroked and touched, we all have erogenous zones, they are really important.*

**MALE 2** – *Erogenous zone? They sound like no go areas to me.*

**FEMALE 2** – *Just the opposite. Loads of people like certain parts of their bodies touched, stroked or nibbled; ears, arms, back, feet, legs and even the armpits.*

**MALE 1** – *Hopefully not after double PE.*



**FEMALE 1** – *I love cuddling. I need to touch and be touched. I need to feel close to my partner.*

**MALE 2** – *Yes, me too.*

**MALE 1** – *And me.*

**FEMALE 2** – *Going back to what you said earlier Will, of course it is scary; everyone finds it scary the first time they have sex.*

**WILL** – *Yes, the thing that worries me most is keeping it up and not coming too soon.*

**MALE 2** – *Okay, cards on the table bro. It is perfectly normal the first time you have sex to come quickly. People, guys come really quickly when they are really excited; others might not come at all.*

**FEMALE 2** – *Some girls dry up a little. I know it happened to me the first time I had sex.*

**MALE 1** – *That's exactly it. I mean it is probably all down to nerves, the stress and excitement of having sex for the first time brings out different responses in men and women.*

**MALE 2** – *Everyone is different Will. Nothing is ever predictable, but whatever happens it is important to remember not to worry and talk to Reena and talk to people you can trust.*

**MALE 1** – *Your brother is right, Will. My first time was a disaster. I couldn't get the condom on properly because my erection wasn't very good and then when I got that sorted I came really quickly. If you are worried about something being physically wrong or you want to talk about something talk to a friend or relative or one of those professional at that sexual health clinic, and remember if you do it once you don't have to do it again immediately. If you think it is too soon or you would rather wait, that's fine.*

**REENA** – *Girls are scared too. I know lots of girls who worry it might hurt the first time, whether it will fit or whether they are sure they can do it right.*

**MALE 2** – *It's the same for girls and boys. You only know you are doing it right if you talk to one another or check things out. If you are doing it and it feels wrong, stop it and do something else, or just stop all together.*

**FEMALE 1** – *I was worried about it hurting so I asked my mum about it and she said that "Sex should never hurt, but it may feel a little uncomfortable for the girl for the first time and some may even bleed a little, but that's quite normal, nothing to worry about". If it is ever uncomfortable or painful you may need to try something else for a while and if that doesn't work then it is important to get some advice. I was so glad I talked about it before hand.*

**FEMALE 2** – *Yes, a counsellor maybe or the young persons clinic are a great place to go for help and advice.*

**WILL** – *Yes, I know people who have gone there for free condoms and others because they think they might have HIV, or Chlamydia or other STIs, that's something else I worry about. I certainly don't want to catch anything like that.*

**REENA** – *I don't want to have sex with someone again that I am not in a really good relationship with and I certainly don't want to get pregnant.*

**MALE 2** – *I always wear a condom. Last thing I want is an infection or get someone pregnant and I certainly don't want to be a dad just yet.*

**REENA** – *I hate the thought of being labelled by people. If you do have sex you are called a slag or something equally horrible and then if you don't have sex people think you must be a lesbian or that you are frigid, you just can't win.*

**MALE 1** – *It's the same for boys. If you don't have sex people think there is something wrong with you, or that you are gay.*

**WILL** – *That's a point, what do gay people do anyway?*

**REENA** – *Same as anyone else I expect.*

**WILL** – *But, how can it be the same?*

**FEMALE 2** – *They kiss, cuddle and have oral sex like straight couples.*

**MALE 1** – *Oral sex, I just thought that was just talking about sex.*

**MALE 2** – *Some gay men have anal sex.*

**WILL** – *You mean they put their penis in the other persons bum?*

**MALE 2** – *Well yes, but they use lubrication and a condom of course.*

**MALE 1** – *Some gay men and lesbians use sex toys with each other like some straight people.*

**FEMALE 2** – *Will, it boils down to this. Find out what they enjoy doing; what excites them and then talk to each other about it. But remember practice safe sex and take precautions so you don't catch any STIs or get her pregnant.*

**WILL** – *There just seems so much to think about and remember, I am just not sure if I am ready for it.*

**MARIA** – *Yes, it can be really hard to know whether you are ready and when the time is right, but please be careful Will. Take the time you need to think about it and make sure you talk to Reena about it. I would hate for you to make a move, only to regret it afterwards, like someone else I know (Maria is referring to herself).*

**WILL** – *Why would I regret it? At least I would have done it and be like the rest of the boys.*

**MARIA** – *That's no reason to have sex with someone Will, just so you can brag to your mates that you have done it. I pity Reena if that's why you want to have sex with her.*

**WILL** – *No, no, I don't mean that. I just mean everyone keeps talking about it and everyone says they are doing it. I just feel that it is the right time. I want to know what it feels like but then I find myself backing off again thinking stuff like how will I know what to do?*

**FEMALE 1** – *Will, despite what you may think or what anyone else might be telling you, everyone else isn't doing it. Just a sec ... where is that article in this magazine? Look is*

says hear “A lot less than half the people under sixteen are having sex, but nearly all of them are talking about it”.

**MARIA** - Mum says ‘sex is best when you are with the right person’ and she says ‘it gets better with practice’. It is really weird thinking of your mum and dad at it.

**WILL** – Yes, I know what you mean.

**FEMALE 1** – Your mum is right. When you do decide to do it you should do it with someone you care about, so you can talk about it and laugh about it and even learn about it with them.

**WILL** – I guess Reena and I need to talk about it more; work out whether we both want to have sex or if it just because other people think we should.

**FEMALE 1** – Exactly. You both need to be ready. If either of you are not sure it is better to say “No thanks, not today” and wait until the time is right for both of you.

**WILL** – I watched a programme on sex the other day on television. It showed how sometimes when people have sex they really regret it, either because they were drunk or on drugs or felt forced and pressured. I don’t want my first time to be like that.

**MALE 2** – Well yes. You have to be careful about alcohol and drugs. Some people think a few drinks can help with fear and embarrassment, but it is really important to keep a clear head and not go over the top. I mean too much alcohol can affect your performance. Sure it might make you feel good and more sexy or ready for anything, but if you go over the top, you are going to do something you can’t handle or may regret. It says something about that in here (picks up a magazine). Here we are, it says, “If you have a drink, make sure in advance that you sort out contraception and that you are not too drunk to use it. Alcohol reduces the chance of an erection and orgasm; it also alters feelings and changes our behaviour. It can make you more confident, more aggressive and more likely to take risks. Many people often forget the importance of safer sex if they have had too much to drink. Drugs also really affect our behaviour in a similar way to alcohol”.

**FEMALE 1** – And as for feeling forced or pressured into having sex no one should ever have to go through that, but sometimes they are. A friend of mine said that ‘her cousin was raped by her boyfriend and she was really messed up about it. It must have been awful’. The really good thing is that she went to see someone about it and even though it was difficult, she said it really helped.

**WILL** – There are some people that are not nice even though you think you can trust them, but I guess the most important thing is if things start to go really wrong with the relationship, get out; no one should ever feel they have to stay in an abusive relationship. Anyway I am pleased we talked, I feel like I know what I want to do now. I am more sure with myself, I want to make sure when we do decide to have sex it going to be fun and if your mum says it gets better with practice then that suits me just fine. Now has that programme started yet?

### **Part 2 – ‘Sex and what it feels like’**

Information given under this category is very factual (please see reference 7 at the end of this appurtenance) and excludes any role play/scenarios as with other information under the different categories.

### **Part 3 – ‘Unwanted touching, sexual abuse and rape’**

Information given under this category is very factual (please see reference 8 at the end of this appurtenance) and excludes any role play/scenarios as with other information under the different categories.

### **Part 4 – ‘Sex and the law’**

Information given under this category is very factual (please see reference 9 at the end of this appurtenance) and excludes any role play/scenarios as with other information under the different categories.

### **Part 5 – ‘Safer sex’**

Information given under this category is very factual (please see reference 10 at the end of this appurtenance) and excludes any role play/scenarios as with other information under the different categories.

## **5<sup>th</sup> Section – ‘TRUE OR FALSE’**

Section five of the SENSE is entitled ‘True or false’. A series of questions are asked and adolescents need to select the correct answer. The questions asked relate to the information provided in the CD-ROM. Points are given at the end of the section as to how well the adolescent did. If the adolescent is not sure of the answer they may pass if they so desire, but it counts as a wrong answer.

### **Questions**

- Spots are caused by a high level of hormones in the body - T
- Masturbation can make you blind - F
- It is normal to sometimes feel self-conscious and confused during puberty - T
- Areola are plants - F
- The clitoris is the female sex organ - T
- Ejaculation is when the sperm is released from the penis during orgasm - T
- Young people never feel stressed - F
- Fallopian tubes are found in the penis - F
- Ovum/ova are female egg cells - T
- There is no such thing as a ‘perfect’ body - T
- The prostate gland is found in the vagina - F
- Communication is really important - T
- Semen is the fluid that contains sperm - T
- A wet dream is when a boy/man ejaculates in his sleep - T
- Compromise means to give and take - T
- Not everyone thinks and feels the same - T
- It is not possible to get pregnant the first time you have sex - F

- A girl can't get pregnant if the boy pulls out before he cums - F
- Alcohol can really affect your judgement - T
- A girl can get pregnant from oral sex - F
- The only real sex is penetrative sex - F
- You should trust everybody you meet - F
- Most sexually transmitted infections are treatable - T
- Emergency contraception can be used if a contraceptive method fails or no contraception has been used - T
- Emergency contraceptive pills can be taken up to 72 hours (3 days) after sex - T
- You can get emergency contraceptive pills free from your GP or local clinic. If you are over 16, you can also buy them from most chemists - T
- You can get emergency contraceptive pills for someone else such as a friend or girlfriend - F
- You can go to a local clinic if you are under 16 - T
- Both boys and girls can get free condoms at clinics - T
- Sex gets better with practice - T
- You should never feel pressured into having sex - T
- Men and women have Erogenous Zones - T
- Most young people under 16 have had sex – F

The sixth and final section to the SENSE CD-ROM is entitled '*Help and advice*'. The information presented when clicking on this button is that offered every time you press 'I' through the CD-ROM and is the same as that in reference 2.

### **Overall comments about the CD-ROM**

In normal computer publications where an option is available, normally you would click on the highlighted topic, however with this Sex Education Multimedia Program you need to click on the number that corresponds with the topic that wants to be viewed.

The following references give details of the materials that are able to be printed out from the SENSE CD-ROM.

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# **APPENDIX 1**

## **Buzzwords – Glossary of Terms**

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Information**



## **APPENDIX 3**

### **Being Gay**

## **APPENDIX 4**

### **I Think I May be Pregnant**

## **APPENDIX 5**

### **Contraception**

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### **Sexually Transmitted Infections**

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### **Sex and What it Feels Like**

## **APPENDIX 8**

### **Unwanted Touching, Sexual Abuse and Rape**

## **APPENDIX 9**

### **Sex and the Law**

## **APPENDIX 10**

### **Safer Sex**



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## **Insert 2**

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**STUDY I:  
TRANSCRIPTIONS OF FAMILY INTERVIEWS  
WHEN ALL TOGETHER  
(including pilot study)**

## Pilot Study for Study I

**Participants:** Female parent (age 50), male parent (age 46), daughter (age 17) and son (age 15).

**Researcher:** I would like to say '*Thank you*' for taking part in the study and give you a brief description of what the study involves. I am interested in knowing how families communicate sex and relationships within the family context. Is that okay with everyone?

**Family verbally agreed.**

**Researcher:** Firstly, I would like to ask each of you to read the consent form and sign two copies. One will be kept by you as a family, and the other will be kept by me for my records.

**Consent forms signed and retained by the family and researcher.**

**Researcher:** Thank you. I would also like to ask each of you to complete the '*Knowledge Quiz*'.

**Young female:** Do you want us to put our names on?

**Researcher:** Ah, yes please. This will be helpful just for this time until I devise a system to identify which family member the documentation belongs to. Thank you for that, I will make a note of it as I didn't see that problem.

**Young female:** What is a coil?

**Researcher:** The coil is a form of contraception that is inserted into the female.

**Male parent:** Asks his wife (female parent) if it is the same as the Dutch cap?

**Female parent:** No, it is not the Dutch cap (she laughs). It sits there for about a year and is then removed by the General Practitioner.

**Researcher:** I would also like to ask each of you to take few moments to complete this questionnaire (demographics questionnaire). There is a separate one for the parents and the young people. May I just ask do you think the term '*young person*' is okay when talking to young people or is it derogatory in some way?

**Young female:** No, I think it is fine.

**Young male:** So do I. It is far better than being called an '*adolescent*'. You could also use '*teenager*', but I think young person is fine.

**Researcher:** Brilliant, thanks for that.

**Young female:** What do you mean when you ask about the sex education I have received in school? (This is question 1 on the demographics questionnaire).

**Researcher:** This is asking about the events that have happened at school to teach you about sex and relationships. If you could put down a brief description of what has been taught at your school, and when, that would be good as each school is different in their approaches to teaching Sex and Relationship Education (SRE).

**Young female:** We even got it at primary school where the nurse came in.

**Researcher:** That would be really helpful if you could put down that information, which would be great.

**Female parent:** You have '*ethnic group*' instead of '*ethic group*' and maybe you should give some pre-answers there as people may feel it is difficult to write down what they are. If I were dark, then I would find it hard to say I was '*black*', maybe. So it would be useful if that was changed, and you get that information from forms at the University Personnel as they have the correct terms.

**Researcher:** Brilliant, thanks for that. I'll change it.

**Female parent:** With question seventeen, what do you mean by '*What sex education did you receive when attending school?*'

**Male parent:** The priest came in.

**Female parent:** Yes, but do you mean '*What sex education did I receive when attending school?*' or '*What sex education I received when at school?*'

**Researcher:** Sorry, what I mean is what sex education did you receive when at school?

**Female parent:** So do you want to know from when at primary and secondary?

**Researcher:** Yes please, if that is okay.

**Female parent:** Maybe split that up then. I think biological lessons about how we are, and about how mums get babies is not sex education is it?

**Researcher:** Within schools in England that is classed as sex education in terms of reproduction.

**Female parent:** It is just at our school that would be part of the biology curriculum.

**Male parent:** Not at ours. To be honest it is hard to remember.

**Female parent:** But to be honest with you if I read that I would put '*none*' because to me biology wasn't sex education.

**Researcher:** Right, okay I will think how I can reword that to make it more explicit. Thank you. It is going to be difficult to get this answer the same for everybody as people were all taught sex education very differently and because of that they will perceive the question quite differently.

**Male parent:** That's right, I agree. Yes, this questionnaire is easy for me as I put 'N/A (non applicable)', because it does not apply as we never talked about it, and that is for most parents.

**Researcher:** What even in Holland?

**Male parent:** We are Roman Catholics so it may be different. The only thing I remember is my dad gave me a book, but that book was already used because he had also given it by my bigger brother.

**Laughter by all.**

**Researcher:** So your sex education was a book that was passed down?

**Male parent:** Yes, that's right and I am sure more got to read it after me.

**Young female:** Ah, for question 8, what do I put when it asks '*How often was sex education taught?*' This is because we only got it for a small part of the year when I was in year nine and then there were just odd lessons after that, like someone coming into the school.

**Young male:** That is what it was like for me as well. You just got bits here and there.

**Researcher:** So out of the time that you were given sex education, how often would you say you it was taught?

**Young female:** Not every week. I suppose maybe every fortnight, but only for about three or four months of the year when in year nine.

**Researcher:** Okay, so are you able to put that down. I know there doesn't seem much room to put all that information in, but I will put bigger gaps for people to write there answers in.

**Young female:** I think '*Do you watch much television?*' is a bit of a vague question because what is much television (TV)? This might mean different things to different people. It might be better if you ask how many hours of television people watch in a day.

**Young male:** Yes, but is she puts that then she is looked too deeply into it. Even if I don't watch TV everyday I may watch a lot more TV than some on a weekend, so in general I do watch a lot of television.

**Young female:** So what did you put for that one?

**Young male:** Yes, because I have my TV on quite a lot and whether I am watching it or not I am still listening to what is being said.

**Researcher:** Okay, they are good answers. I will try and reword the question so it covers it from both of your opinions. Thanks.

**Demographic questionnaires were completed by the family members and returned to the researcher.**

**Researcher:** Thank you for completing the consent form, knowledge quiz and demographics questionnaire. I would now like to ask a few questions about how you as a family discuss sexual matters. So, as a family do you talk openly about sex?

**Young male:** No.

**Young female:** No, not really, it just becomes a joke and somebody gets told to '*shut up*'. But, say I did want to know something I would talk to my mum about it, but not as a family.

**Researcher:** So you talk about it privately?

**Young female:** Yes. It is just not something I wish to discuss around the dinner table.

**Female parent:** Well we did discuss contraception as a family.

**Young female:** Yes, that's true. We did talk about it.

**Male parent:** Yes, but it is an important matter.

**Female parent:** Very important.

**Young female:** Yes, but I would prefer to talk to my mum about it.

**Researcher:** So young male, how do you feel about that? Would you go and talk to your Mum?

**Young male:** I would talk to my friends about it.

**Young female:** Yes, I talk to my friends more about it.

**Researcher:** So you (young female) would initially still want to talk to you friends about it. If you wanted to talk about your boyfriend, would you still talk to your friends about it or would you want to talk to your Mum?

**Young female:** What do you mean?

**Researcher:** Say with the contraception there, why did you feel you wanted to talk to your family, rather than just your friends?

**Young female:** They are more experienced and they know more about the risks. Like they are older so they will have had sexual experiences, whereas your friends are at the same stage as you, or behind you in knowledge and experience.

**Male parent:** There is one more important thing here. It is normal and easy to talk to their friends; they are at the same level. When you talk about contraception you have to go the doctors for the pill or whatever, so you have to make the decision that relates to the family. So, I think she brought up something not to go behind our back and save her having to go on her own to the Doctor. Is that true?

**Young female:** Nods and says, 'Yes'.

**Researcher:** So who would you say initiates the conversation when talking about sexual matters?

**Young female:** Depends. Like sometimes mum will ask me questions, but not generally, it is when we are alone. Generally we talk if we want to, but we don't talk about it openly because we don't feel comfortable. We will go and talk only if we want to talk about something.

**Researcher:** Is that the same for you (young male)?

**Young male:** Yes, that's true for me too.

**Young female:** They just leave us be. They do not sit us down and say '*Right, we are going to discuss ... whatever?*'

**Male parent:** No, sometimes when we are around together and there is a topic, mum is normally the one who knows when something is going on with you and when something is happening, but sometimes we talk about things.

**Young female:** Like when ... We did talk about the contraception but we don't really talk about anything else.

**Male parent:** We talk often, by example of how English parents talk to their children, or how we talk to our children. I think there is another aspect you need to keep in mind '*young female and young male*' are not my children. That is in relation to sex. I think it is very important because I felt the same when I was younger when you don't have your natural father; you naturally go to your mum than the partner of your mum. I don't mind when they come to me, but I don't have a problem at all that they discuss things with their mum because like everything, it is private. The young female may ask her mum if she can speak to her, but she doesn't want me to know, that is okay. Overall we talk a lot, about a lot and are quite open-minded.

**Young female:** Mum has always talked to us openly.

**Researcher:** You say your mum talks openly, but what does she talk about?

**Young female:** Like when we lived in Holland and were riding through the woods there was a condom on the floor and we asked what it was? She never made up little stories to just hide behind. She was always true to us. This is something we have grown-up with anyways so it isn't such a big deal to us.

**Researcher:** So would you say your mum initiates the conversation on sexual matters?

**Female parent:** No. it happened when we were cycling through the forest when they 3 and 4, 4 and 5 years old when they found a condom and they asked what it was? I then sat them down and said what it was and what it was used for. So they found it and asked me questions and I gave them an honest answer.

**Researcher:** So can I search for clarity here? You say that although you don't sit discussing sex, you have actually been taught about sexual matters from a very young age.

**Young female:** Yes, the thing is as well I have friends whose parents sat them down one day and told them all about it, I just can't remember that ever happening. It just seems that we have got to know the information gradually and that it is no big deal.

**Researcher:** Yes. You said before as well that you talk to your friends and that sometimes they do not know much more than you. Do you ever come home and ask about whether the things that you and your friends talk about are true?

**Young female:** Yes, sometimes.

**Researcher:** What about you? (Young male)

**Young male:** No, I don't. I just talk to my friends and no-one else.

**Young female:** What was really funny is when we took mum off to see an Austin Powers film, she just fell off to sleep.

**Laughter by all.**

**Young female:** This was when none of our friends were allowed to go because their parents thought it was too rude. It was really funny because it is like role-reversal.

**Researcher:** I think as well your mum has never stopped you finding out the information from a very young age.

**Male parent:** We do the same with alcohol. I can give you another story about trust and being open-minded. I had a nephew who came over and who was sixteen and he said to me *'I need some condoms, but I am too scared to buy them'*, so we talked for a long time because he had a girlfriend, so I bought the condoms for him, but we never push the children, it is up to them.

**Researcher:** So why do you think you can talk to your mum more about sexual matters than the male parent in the house?

**Young female:** Because I am close to my mum and she is a female too so she can relate more to what I say.

**Researcher:** What about you? (Young male)

**Young male:** I think it is that I feel less intimidated.

**Female parent:** You asked me as well why I would not go to my mother rather than my father to discuss sex. I suppose for me my father was very religious and did not believe in sex before marriage, so I would also go to my mum.

**Researcher:** So what you are saying is that you will discuss with the person that is least likely to condemn you?

**Female parent:** Yes, and I would purely not go to my father because of the religion as he would only ever say *'No sex before marriage'*.

**Male parent:** We just got told it was bad and that we should not do it.

**Researcher:** So you have changed all that then for when you educate your children.

**Female parent:** Yes, and I also said at the time when finding the condom that *'you make love'* it is not *'fucking'*. It is very important that it is with feelings. Later on after that if I ever say the something like *'that was a good fuck'*, they would tell me off and they still tell me off even now if I use the word. I think it is just very interesting that they have not let me forget it.

**Researcher:** It is obvious that the honesty within the family has more than likely always allowed your children to ask about sexual matters at a time when they are ready to hear it. So when you discuss sexual matters with your mum is there anything you prefer not to discuss?

**Young female:** She asks questions about the detail and then I get embarrassed, because I would rather talk to my friend because it is very personal, but I would go straight to my mum if I was worried or needed the right information, rather than discussing my sex life.

**Young male:** That is the same for me also, some things are just very personal, and I think sex is one of them.

**Male parent:** So if you had sex would you tell me or your mum?

**Young male:** No!

**Female parent:** No!

**Male parent:** So would you be happy buying condoms on your own?

**Young male:** Yes.

**Young female:** So would you tell me if you did it?

**Young male:** Maybe.

**Female parent:** So if I asked you if you had had sex would you give me an honest answer?

**Young male:** I don't know. I would tell you when I see a need.

**Female parent:** So what you would tell me when you have got your girlfriend pregnant?

**Mother shocked.**

**Researcher:** So it is on a need to know basis?

**Young male:** Yes.

**Researcher:** What age do you think your children should know about sex?

**Female parent:** About 9 or 10 years old.

**Male parent:** I have known the children from 9 and 10 years old and sex is quite a natural thing for us to discuss, but the young female used to get upset because she lost friends because we were so open in our communications, including sex. One of her friends wasn't allowed to come to the house because we talked about all things about life. One of those being sex and relationships.

**Researcher:** What age do the young people think they should know about sex?

**Young male:** 9-10 year old.

**Young female:** Eight, and only because some girls can start developing earlier than others, so they need to know about the changes that are happening to them so they don't get scared and upset.

**Researcher:** Okay. Is there anything anybody else would like to add based on what we have discussed?

**Silence.**

**Researcher:** Well I will just let you carry on then by exploring the Sense CD.

Family listened to the introduction.

Body language is very open as they explore the following sections: -

- ❖ Body language
- ❖ Sexual fantasies
- ❖ Relationships
- ❖ Virtual clinic
- ❖ Sex
- ❖ True or false – Scored 33/33 for the test. Family cheers.

After the family have viewed the many aspects of the multimedia program the researcher asks if they would complete a pre-test knowledge quiz. Afterwards the family are asked the following questions.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD in general?

**Young male:** Good.

**Young female:** Really good.

**Researcher:** Did you feel that by watching the multimedia program that it would make you feel more likely to discuss more sexual matters within the family for the future?

**Young female:** Yes, because if you see people communicating about sexual matters you are more likely to do it yourself.

**Young male:** Yes, probably.

**Researcher:** What bits did you like about the CD?

**Young male:** It was practical.

**Young female:** The humour made sex seem less serious as a topic and the way they discuss sex on the CD is really good.

**Researcher:** What did the parents think?

**Female parent:** I am more interested in what they think?

**Male parent:** Yes, I think it is important that they say what they think without our influence.

**Researcher:** Okay. Did you relate more to the real characters, than the cartoons?

**Young female:** Yes.

**Young male:** Yes, you listen to the real characters as though they were your friends.

**Researcher:** If you wanted to find out more would you use the CD yourself?

**Young female:** Yes, especially if you were too embarrassed to ask anybody else.

**Young male:** Yes, you still get the information without the embarrassment.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the information offered on the CD is on the same wave length as young people in that it is covering the information you most want to know about?

**Young male:** Definitely.

**Young female:** Yes.

**Researcher:** After watching the CD together as a family how do you think it will have improved some of the barriers to discussing sexual matters in the future?

**Young female:** I think we will still want to keep certain things about our sex lives private, but the CD is good at getting people to talk more.

**Young male:** Yes, I think it does especially if you watch it together as a family.

**Researcher:** Was there something's on the CD that you just did not want to be look at when in the presence of the rest of the family?

**Young female:** No.

**Young male:** No.

**Researcher:** I know you are a pretty unique family in the way you discuss matters associated with sex, but what would your ideal family be like for when discussing sexual matters.

**Young female:** What I have I suppose. Because I know they are all there for me if I need to talk to them about anything.

**Young male:** Yes. What we have I suppose.

**Researcher:** So just for clarity do you think the CD is good at removing or reducing barriers when discussing sex within the family if there were any?

**Young female:** Yes.

**Young male:** Yes.

**Researcher:** Would anybody like to add anything else now we are coming to a close with the interview?

**Silence.**

**Researcher:** Well, I would just like to say a sincere '*Thank you*' for helping me, I really do appreciate it.

**Male parent:** Yes, I would just like to say I think it is a very informative CD and to watch it in such an environment where you have to do your job, but I think that the CD is ideal just to watch when you want to look at a specific thing. We didn't get chance to cover everything, but it is important to know that there is so much information and I think when I was a teenager say if I wanted to know about a particular topic, the CD is an ideal



tool but to watch it for an hour, it is impossible because there is so much information. It could take weeks to look through the whole CD and then comment on it, but I thought it was good.

**Young male:** Yes, but we were not asked to look at every section or component we were just asked to explore the sections we wanted to look at, which was good because then you would not get bored looking at stuff that doesn't interest you.

**Young female:** I don't think people would use the CD in that way though. I think they would use the CD to relate to a particular topic, but the CD is good in that it has all the things there for when you need it, and it is really easy to understand.

**Female parent:** I think it is interesting that this CD has been in the house for a year and only my daughter and I have looked at it, so I think it is important for the family to look at it together to show its content. As long as people know it is there then I think it is good as a reference tool.

**Researcher:** Thanks the family once again and a brief description was given as to the purpose of the research. Thank you to a really open and genuine family.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Family Interview for Stage I

**Participants:** Female parent (aged 43), male parent (aged 43), and young female (aged 14).

**Researcher:** I would like to say ‘*Thank you*’ for taking part in the study and give you a brief description of what the study involves. I am interested in knowing how families communicate sex and relationships within the family context. Is that okay with everyone?

**Family verbally agreed.**

**Researcher:** Firstly, I would like to ask each of you to read the consent form and sign both copies. One will be kept by you as a family, and the other will be kept by me for my records.

**Consent form signed and retained by the family and researcher.**

**Researcher:** Thank you. I would also like to ask each of you to fill out the ‘*Knowledge Quiz*’ and put a percentage beside about how sure you are of the answer you have given to being correct.

**Knowledge quiz completed by all and kept by the researcher.**

**Researcher:** I would also like to ask each of you to take few moments to complete this questionnaire (demographics questionnaire). There is a separate one for the parents and the young people. May I just ask do you think the term ‘*young person*’ is okay when talking to young people or is it derogatory in some way?

**Young female:** No that is okay with me, whatever you prefer.

**Researcher:** Okay, thanks.

**Father:** So this is totally confidential? You won’t sell it on the Internet?

**Researcher:** Definitely not.

**Everybody laughs.**

**Mother:** Asks father what his job title is?

**Father:** Instrument Engineer, and what is yours?

**Mother:** Accounts administrator.

**Father:** Ah, right.

**Researcher:** Before we look at the intervention, I would just like to ask you a few questions about how you as a family discuss SRE matters. Within the family at what age would you say you have talked about sexual matters?

**Mother:** Probably from primary school. Year five (age 9-10 years) onwards in a delicate way.

**Father:** We have never sat down and formally talked about sex. You know we have never gone through this scenario and said ‘*this is the penis and this is the vagina*’ and all such as that. We have left that generally to the school and authorities, whatever, but we have talked about it, haven’t we?

**Mother:** We have talked about it.

**Father:** If it has been topical, say something that she (daughter) has seen on the television and we generally ask the questions to see what she is thinking. I generally get the impression she is well up with it on what she needs to know.

**Researcher:** So would your daughter ask the questions or would you ask her?

**Mother:** It depends what is on the television and how the conversation has come up, because I know if it is something I have seen and I know she is watching it then you think

I should be saying something here. So you do mention it, but she might ask something as well.

**Father:** I mean it is embarrassing isn't it?

**Mother:** Yes, it can be.

**Daughter:** Well I don't think it is embarrassing.

**Mother:** Well no but today's generation and young people are different to the way we are and we only think like that by the way we were taught. Although you don't think it is, and we don't make it that way with you it was like that for us, more than it is for you.

**Father:** It depends what context you're talking about. I mean if you see someone having sex on the television, you think so what. But what gets me is if you see the gays and the lesbians.

**Researcher:** So would you talk to your daughter about that?

**Father:** Well yes, I normally mention that don't I?

**Daughter:** Laughs.

**Mother:** Yes, big style.

**The family laugh loudly.**

**Researcher:** So do I detect a homophobe in the family?

**Father:** No, I mean if you are that way, then you are that way; no issue, but why encourage it? So usually I am derogatory about that side of things. It's everywhere! The thing about the media is ... in the media there are a lot of lesbians and gays within that median and they get far too much. I mean compared to the percentage of those who are not that way inclined, there is far too much and it almost like a torture type thing in that you have to watch it all of the time.

**Researcher:** Yes, thank you. So as a family you would say you talk openly about sex if the matter arises?

**Mother:** Yes, at a time that is right for her.

**Father:** I mean she might know more about sex and things more than I do, its common knowledge, but they are intelligent enough to cope with it. I mean you have to give them some trust as well. Looks at daughter and says "*No boys*".

**Daughter:** She laughs.

**Mother:** This is it, I think you can pick out times that you want to talk about it as you see them develop because you know they are changing anyway and you know then what the right time is to say certain things. You know when boyfriends appear on the scene or when they start talking about boys, you say well you have got to start mentioning things, but not go into great detail. You just talk about it at the time.

**Father:** Tell you what is different these days is the relationships that she and other girls have and the way they just have boys who are just friends.

**Researcher:** Yes, not partner boyfriends.

**Mother:** Yes.

**Father:** I mean when I grew up and it was the same for you (the mother) if you go out with a lad, or you go out with a girl, they are an item. These days the social thing is you can have boys who are friends but there is no sexual side to it, which I find strange.

**Researcher:** Mmm, what do you think? (the young person) Do you agree with that?

**Daughter:** Yes, I agree, but it is good because boys are easier to talk to. Like sometimes they would understand you more than a girl would. I mean it is also good to get a boys point of view and they get your point of view. This way they do not talk about you behind

your back because they understand you better. If you are friends with a boy they are more likely to say what they think to your face, where girls often bitch and be nasty about what you tell them.

**Researcher:** So would you say being friends with a boy stops them talking about you behind your back?

**Daughter:** Yes, sort of, but if you are friends with them they are more likely to be honest with you and they tell you about them, which is good because you get it from the male perspective.

**Researcher:** So what age were you when you wanted to start knowing about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** About year six (age 10-11 years) before I went up to secondary school. It starts to change because there are a lot more people and boys around you and there is a lot more people around you that are different ages, so you start to want to know more and probably as quick as possible.

**Researcher:** So can I ask if you think your family is typical of how parents talk to their children about sexual matters?

**Father:** I would say people of our age group are probably the norm.

**Mother:** Yes the friends I have with similar age kids to my daughter, I would say we are quite similar in our attitudes and views.

**Father:** There is no doubt that these days with having the Internet and that ... the sex education has improved over the years.

**Researcher:** What would you say the main reason for this improvement?

**Father:** I think the sex education they receive at school is better. I mean the HIV thing was massive and it was always regarded as a gay mans disease then, and I think that when it moved over to heterosexual that prompted a huge response and STIs went right down, but now they are on their way up and I think it is to do with the attitudes. I mean it was in The Times newspaper about teenage girls having oral sex with different age boys, and all the rest of it at school and there are no consequences. It was almost like a free-for-all type thing.

**Mother:** I think though this is down to some of the music channels that are not edited.

**Father:** I mean it is not pornography, it is just seductive. I mean young women will be dancing with just knickers and a vest on and I am sure our daughter isn't affected by it, but it is there when young people turn on the television, and it is suggestive sometimes passes the incorrect message out to young people.

**Mother:** Yes, it is more about what is right and what is wrong.

**Father:** Like I put in the questionnaire, I don't see it as bad, it is just with young people who are less intelligent that are at risk, but I don't think the media actually helps. I think young people need to have choices though and this is what we try and get across to our daughter in that she needs to be educated correctly so she make her own decisions. This is the same as getting married, having kids or whatever. That is how it was years ago when we got married, but if she doesn't want that then we need to make sure she has the knowledge to plan her life based on what she wants for her future.

**Researcher:** Well thank you very much for your comments, I really appreciate it. I would now like to ask you to explore the Sense CD as a family and I will now just keep quiet.

**Father:** Yes, right! (Joking and laughed).

**Family listened to the introduction.**

When exploring the Sense CD the daughter and father lay side by side on the floor, whilst the mother sat in the chair beside them. Father and daughter seem to be a lot more open with each other when discussing sexual matters. The following sections are then explored:

- ❖ Sexuality and sexual feelings
- ❖ Know your body – Father commented on how simplistic this section was and how it would become boring after a while.
- ❖ Sexual attraction - Daughter remarked on how boring the fly was and the father refused to watch the scenario concerning the two gay boys.
- ❖ Sexual fantasies.
- ❖ Relationships
- ❖ Communication
- ❖ True or false – Father and daughter answered these questions together. The daughter was unsure as to the answer for: *'Areola are plants'* and *'A girl can't get pregnant if the boy pulls out before he comes'*. The father corrected her and said *"The girl can get pregnant because he may have already cum inside of her if he got excited before he finally ejaculates. This is what they mean by pre cum."* The daughter listened attentively and just said *"Ah, right"*.

The family continued to do the quiz and got 33 out of 33. They were all really happy and had finished looked at the sections they wanted as the daughter was getting tired.

I then asked the family to complete the quiz again, before asking them a last few questions to finalise the interview.

**Researcher:** So what did you think of the Sense CD (Young Person)?

**Daughter:** I thought it was alright, and it doesn't really tell me much more than I know, but it doesn't really talk about being under pressure, and peer pressure, which is a big thing when you are a teenager.

**Researcher:** But if you wanted to find out information or facts would you use the CD?

**Daughter:** Yes, if I needed to find out something I would. I think it is good as a reference point, but not to sit and go through it in such detail as we have.

**Researcher:** And, what did you think of it as parents?

**Father:** It is dodgy!

**Mother:** No, it is alright. It says what it has to say, but it is really just in one direction. It is very sensible. Sensible being the word.

**Father:** I mean I know we joke about certain issues (homosexuality), but there is no problem or situation that our daughter couldn't come and talk to us about. I like to think that anyway. I also wouldn't like to think she had to go and buy a CD to find out a problem or fact. I would like to think she would come to me or her mum.

**Researcher:** Do you agree with that?

**Daughter:** Yes, we are very open and we talk about lots of things such as drugs, alcohol as well as sex.

**Researcher:** So who would you say you talked most to about sex?

**Daughter:** I don't know really. I suppose both.

**Researcher:** So is there anything that you would talk to your mum about, but not your dad and visa versa?

**Daughter:** No, I talk to them both to get a good overall opinion of a topic. They both offer the same information normally, but it is nice to get both of their views.

**Researcher:** So do you think that after watching the CD as a family that it will help communicate sexual matters in the future?

**Daughter:** No.

**Mother:** I wouldn't say so because there is nothing on the CD that we have not already discussed as a family or individually with our daughter.

**Father:** I mean there was only one question on there that you didn't know and that was about withdrawing before sex had finished.

**Daughter:** Yes, but after you explained it I realised that I knew most of the answer, it was just the way it was asked that I felt unclear about.

**Mother:** Yes, but that question also tells me you might not necessarily know the true extent of its meaning unless you were having sex, so I think that comes with experience.

**Researcher:** So do you talk to your friends about sex (Young person)?

**Daughter:** Yes, but it is mainly about daft stuff as they are coming from my perspective, but then I ask mum or dad later if it is true, and then I will tell my friends the accurate information later.

**Researcher:** Well I have run out of questions as I think you have answered the ones that I needed the answers to.

**Family laugh.**

**Father:** I mean the thing is she knows how important sex is in the life cycle and that it is not a toy, a game, it is not just fun and even if she didn't ask us she would find out the facts, that's just the way she is.

**Mother:** It is the way we have brought her up.

**Researcher:** So would you mind if I came back and asked you again in a week if the CD has made a difference in the way you communicate sex within the family?

**Family agrees that it is okay.**

**Researcher:** Well, I would just like to say a sincere '*Thank you*' for helping me, I really do appreciate it. Family were given a description as to the purpose of the research. Returned a week later the family completed the follow-up sexual knowledge questionnaire. The family agreed that there had been no conversations that had stemmed from watching the multimedia program. This could indicate that much of the content on the CD had already been discussed by the family previously as indicated in the initial interview.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Family Interview for Study I

**Participants:** Female parent (aged 35) and son (aged 11). Father absent due to working away (aged 37).

**Consent form signed and retained by the family and researcher.**

**Researcher:** Thank you. I would also like to ask each of you to fill out the '*Knowledge Quiz*' and put a percentage beside about how sure you are of the answer you have given to being correct.

**Knowledge quiz completed by all and kept by the researcher.**

**Researcher:** Before we start I would like to say '*Thank you*' for taking part in the study and give you a brief description of what the study involves. I am interested in knowing how families communicate sex and relationships within the family context. Is that okay with you both?

**Mother:** Yes, we can do this can't we Son? We have been talking about it lately because you have been doing it at school.

**Son:** But you won't talk to your gran about it will you?

**Mother:** No, (Mother laughs).

**Son:** No, not my gran, she is old. You see it all the time magazines and newspapers as well though.

**Mother:** Yes, can you remember that magazine that came with the Sunday newspaper?

**Son:** Yes.

**Mother:** What was it?

**Son:** Sexy woman. (Son smiles, and grins in a clever manner)

**Mother:** Yes, that right – the worlds 50 sexy women.

**Researcher:** And what did they look like?

**Son:** I can't remember, it was like three years ago.

**Mother:** And where did you take it?

**Son:** To my room.

**They both laughed.**

**Researcher:** So, what you were eight at the time?

**Son:** Yes.

**Researcher:** So you think it is okay to look at women who are naked?

**Son:** Yeah, it is in the newspaper everyday like the one that mum gets.

**Mother:** Well, I get The Sun, but not for page three.

**Researcher:** Okay, while we talk can I ask each of you to take few moments to complete this questionnaire (demographics questionnaire). There is a separate one for the parents and the young people.

**The mother and son started filling out the questionnaire, however the son kept talking to his mother about the questions as he answered them.**

**Son:** Asks ... "what television programmes do I watch, except wrestling?" I don't watch any.

**Mother:** We must have watched something with sexual health or education in it.

**Son:** I watch videos at school, but nothing else.

**Mother:** Yes, I know, but we must have seen something on television.

**Son:** No, we haven't.

**Researcher:** Well you can always come back to that one if you think of something. What is the next question?

**Researcher sits with the son to talk about the answers to the questions.**

**Researcher:** So, do you think you learn a lot through the media say from soap operas?

**Son:** No.

**Researcher:** Magazines?

**Son:** Only the ones my mum brings home.

**Mother:** I don't think you will get any sex education from those magazines.

**Son:** Yes, you do from the models and the different body shapes.

**Researcher:** So when you talk about sex who would you say you talk to the most?

**Son:** Have a laugh with mates.

**Researcher:** But say you wanted to find out something serious, who would you go to?

**Son:** The Internet.

**Mother:** No. Would you?

**Son:** Yes, I would go to you first though.

**Mother:** I was going to say!

**Researcher:** Would it mum or dad?

**Son:** Mum, because dads a butcher.

**We all laugh!**

**Son:** Dad wouldn't talk about it properly.

**Mother:** Yes, he is not the most sensitive sole is he?

**Son:** No, he doesn't know anything.

**Mother:** Aw son, he would know about the anatomy.

**Son:** What's that?

**Mother:** The organs and the body parts.

**Son:** Yes, well I know all that.

**Researcher:** Do you feel comfortable talking to your mum about sexually matters?

**Son:** Yes, sort of.

**Researcher:** Why?

**Son:** I don't know. She is a nurse, so she knows about it and she has been there eighteen years, which is quite encouraging.

**Researcher:** So have you been a nurse 18 years?

**Mother:** Hmm, either 16 or 18.

**Son:** You said you were nursing in the 70s.

**Mother:** I did not.

**Son:** That's what you told me.

**Mother:** I said the 80s, how old do you think I am? I was in primary school in the 70s. (Mother laughs)

**Researcher:** Do you ever feel embarrassed talking to your mum about things?

**Son:** No, because she is your mum.

**Researcher:** So you can talk to your mum about anything?

**Son:** Yes, basically. Unless it is something I have done wrong like knocked in the car bumper.

**Researcher:** Car bumper!

**Mother:** Ah but you were only four when you let the hand break off in the car, but I forgave you. You can easily tell me when you have done things naughty.



**Researcher:** So do you talk to your friends about sex?

**Son:** No, not really we just laugh about it in a joking way.

**Researcher:** Do many of your friends have boyfriends or girlfriends?

**Mother:** This will be a fun answer.

**Son:** Yes, loads.

**Son got embarrassed.**

**Researcher:** Do you have a girlfriend?

**Son:** No, I don't.

**Researcher:** So do your friends talk about their girlfriends?

**Son:** Just about the way they look. They start arguing about whose girlfriend looks better. It is really funny to watch because it always ends up with someone getting shoved over the table.

**Researcher:** Do they ever laugh about the things they do, like kissing?

**Son:** They don't laugh, but they do brag about it.

**Researcher:** You know when your friends are talking; do they ever talk about sex?

**Son:** No. Some lads brag about that they have had sex with their girlfriends, but you know they are lying. It is eligible under the age of 16.

**Researcher:** So why do you think they are saying they have when they haven't?

**Son:** I think they are just trying to look clever.

**Mother:** What even kids your age?

**Son:** Yes people my age; 12 and 13.

**Mother:** Gosh. Let's hope they know about condoms, eh?

**Son:** Yes. They know more than the teacher.

**Mother:** I bet they do.

**Son:** Yes, because their mum and dads have told them it all.

**Researcher:** So what sorts of things do you think their parents talk to them about though?

**Son:** I don't know I haven't been to their houses, but I am pretty sure they have told their kids about it.

**Mother:** What about sex?

**Son:** Yes, some of them knew about it when they were six. You know Arthur (false name use for confidentiality purposes) he knew about it when he was six.

**Researcher:** So what sorts of things do you think they know more about than you?

**Son:** Not a lot really, because our teacher told us how people have sex.

**Mother:** Did they talk to you about the ways not to have a baby?

**Son:** Yes, it is called contraception which is pills and condoms, and that.

**Researcher:** Great! So you know before when you were saying you talk to your mum about sex, but do you talk to your dad about things when he is home on a weekend?

**Son:** No, because he is thick.

**Mother:** Aw son, that's not a nice thing to say.

**Son:** No, you have to admit it, he is.

**Mother:** He isn't the most sensitive person, but ... silence.

**Researcher:** When you say he is not sensitive, what answer do you think he would give if you asked him about sex?

**Son:** Probably something to do with swearing. (Both laugh). He is just thick!

**Mother:** He is not thick, he just wasn't taught it when he was younger. He wouldn't have talked to his mum and dad about it, would he?

**Son:** No, grand-dad would just sit their wit his pipe in his mouth, laughing.

**Mother:** They are both dead now and can't imagine them ever talking about it.

**Researcher:** How important do you think it is for the school to teach you about Sex and Relationship Education?

**Son:** Very important so you are not surprised when things happen?

**Researcher:** So how would you rate the sex education you receive?

**Son:** I would give in 9 out of 10.

**Mother:** So that is very good then.

**Researcher:** So as a family how would you say you communicate when talking about sex and sexual matters?

**Son:** We don't really communicate it.

**Mother:** Well it is more that we talk about things when they arise.

**Researcher:** So if you were unsure of something you had been taught at school would you come home and talk to your mum about it?

**Son:** Yes, definitely as long as my brothers were not around.

**Researcher:** But you wouldn't ask your dad?

**Son:** No.

**Mother:** I think we are painting a bad picture of your dad really. You can ask him things, but if it was to do with sex he would probably say "*go and ask your mum*", wouldn't he?

**Son:** Yes.

**Mother:** But you and I get chance to talk about things on a night time. We have half-an-hour when you brothers have gone to bed, so we generally talk about things like this then, don't we?

**Son:** Yes, we do have good talks, just you and me. That's when I ask questions, especially if I have a test on sex education the next day. I would also ask about things if I was curious to know the right facts.

**Mother:** Yes, that's one of your phrases. What is it?

**Son:** If I don't ask, I won't find out.

**Researcher:** Brilliant. Is it okay with you both if I set-up the Sense CD now for you to both watch together?

**Mother:** Yes, please do.

The mother and son sit together to watch the Sense CD. Mother commented on how it was confusing by having to press the button to the side of each topic, rather than clicking on the title of each subject, but son had no problem with it and knew exactly what to do even though he had never used the Sense CD before.

Mother and son sat close together and listened to the introduction. They then chose to explore the following sections:-

- ❖ **Sex:**

- ❖ **Relationships** - The son commented on how this section was boring, so he exited from this section and moved to:

- ❖ **Virtual Clinic**

- ❖ **True & False** - The mother and son went through the questions and discussed the different questions. The mother explained in a patient and understanding manner concerning the things her son wasn't sure of. However, the son knew a lot of the

answers about spots, teenage feelings and puberty. The only questions he was unsure about was '*Emergency contraception*' and '*Erogenous zones*'.  
Got 30 out of 33. They then chose to look at the section entitled:-

❖ **Sexual feelings**

❖ **Know your body**

❖ **Sexual attraction** –Both found the sexual fantasies section funny and they laughed together.

After the family mother and son viewed had explored the multimedia program the researcher asks if they would complete a pre-test knowledge quiz. Afterwards the family are asked the following questions.

**Researcher:** So can I ask (the son) what did you think of the CD?

**Son:** It was good, I really enjoyed it and I think it is really good for my age group. My friends and I want to find out stuff like this.

**Researcher:** What did you think were the best sections on the CD?

**Son:** I like the quiz, I though it was a really good game.

**Mother:** I think for you this is really good because it doesn't involve too much writing, which is what you don't like.

**Son:** Yes, I would rather learn about sex education through something like this, because you can get involved.

**Researcher:** So what did you think about the fly?

**Son:** I thought he was gay.

**Researcher:** So can I ask what your interpretation is of being gay?

**Son:** Well daft and stupid, he was a little annoying as well just at times when you were trying to think about what you had seen.

**Researcher:** So if you had this CD at home would you use it to try and find out more facts.

**Son:** I might use it, but I would probably also just do a search on Google.

**Researchers:** What did you think of the CD as a parent and what age would you use it up to?

**Mother:** I thought it was really good. I mean if we had something like this at home I think I would use it up until the age of about 15, 16 depending on the maturity of the child. I think this should be taught with the collaboration of the school.

**Researcher:** So do you mind if I come back in a week and ask you more questions when you have had time to reflect and use the CD again?

**Son:** No, that's fine with me, I have enjoyed this. You will have to come on a night when I am in though.

**Mother:** Laughed!

**Researcher:** So what night would you like me to come back?

**It was agreed that it would be exactly a week from the initial meeting. The researcher left the Sense CD with the family and a week later the interview the researcher went back and asked the mother and son to complete the follow-up sexual knowledge questionnaire and then asked the following questions:**

**Researcher:** The first question I would like to ask is relating to the Sense CD that we went through last week when you said you really liked it, but have you been looked at it again this week?

**Son:** Yes.

**Mother:** Well, you have. I haven't I must admit.

**Researcher:** Okay. From first watching it, and now, what do you think of it? Has your opinion changed at all?

**Son:** Well I still think it is good and it gives you quite a lot of advice.

**Researcher:** So what sections did you look at the most?

**Son:** I looked at the quiz and the relationships one.

**Researcher:** So what made you want to look at these sections rather than the others?

**Son:** Don't know! It is just at my age people are asking each other out, and stuff.

**Mother:** Mmm.

**Researcher:** So what was your favourite section of the CD?

**Son:** Don't know really. I liked the quiz though.

**Mother:** So have you done it again?

**Son:** Yes, but I got six wrong this time instead of three.

**Researcher:** Aw, bless. So because you have had chance to look at the CD is it better than you originally thought?

**Son:** Well, ah, not really, I just enjoy playing with it.

**Researcher:** So if it was here longer would you keep looking at it?

**Son:** Yes.

**Researcher:** Would you like me to leave it another week?

**Son:** Yes please.

**Researcher:** Okay I can leave it another week. So when you were watching the CD, did you talk to you mum about the things that you learnt from the CD?

**Son:** No.

**Researcher:** Why was that?

**Son:** More than likely, mum was busy at the time.

**Mother:** Yes. We haven't had much time to talk lately as there is a lot going on at the moment, especially with work.

**Son:** Yes, and I had had lots of homework and stuff.

**Researcher:** So it more about time than anything, but your dad was home this weekend gone, so did you get talk to your dad about the CD?

**Son:** No, because he was doing other stuff.

**Researcher:** Right, so mum did you talk to dad about the CD?

**Mother:** Yes, I told him about what we did.

**Researcher:** What did he think? Did he like the sound of it? What did he think?

**Mother:** Indifferent. He just said there was nothing like that in his day.

**Researcher:** Did he think it was needed in this day and age?

**Mother:** Yes. What he was thinking was that with there being computers now and if we have the technology, then we should be incorporating it into how we teach young people. He didn't look at the CD but I didn't expect him to really.

**Researcher:** So what sort of things did you both discuss about it?

**Mother:** I was just telling him what was on it.

**Researcher:** Was he shocked or surprised?

**Mother:** I think he was a bit shocked actually, but he never said. It was more the look of ... does he need to know about things like masturbation and things like that.

**Researcher:** I know last week when we talked you said you do not talk to your dad about sex but is there anything you can remember your dad telling you about sex, or how you are going to grow into a man?

**Son:** No, he doesn't tell me about thing.

**Researcher:** If you're mum tells you something about sex, or if you learn something about sexual matters, do you tell your mates, to give them the correct answers.

**Son:** No.

**Researcher:** So what sort of sexual things do your mates talk about?

**Son:** Not a lot of what we have talked about. It is mainly teasing each other about girls and that. Some of them say they have had sex, but I don't believe them and neither does anyone else.

**Researcher:** So when you learn about sex do you tell your younger brother about things that you have learnt about sex?

**Son:** Well I have told them bits about it.

**Researcher:** So what sort of things have you told them?

**Son:** Laughs. Bad words I suppose. I tell them the slang terms for a penis and things like that, just because that's the words they are hearing when talking to their friends.

**Researcher:** Last week you talked about taking that magazine up into your room but when you look at pictures of women in magazines and newspapers, what are you thinking about?

**Son:** I don't know. Laughs. I suppose with some of them having tops on I would look at the different shapes and the different types of bodies' women have.

**Researcher:** Okay. Last week we also talked about using computers to educate yourself about sexual matters. If you were to go to find out more information, where would you go?

**Son:** On the Internet through Google or something like that.

**Researcher:** So when you use the Internet do you find the right information and the things that you initially wanted to search for?

**Son:** Yes, it gives you different sites to look at as well.

**Researcher:** So what sorts of things have you wanted to find out more about?

**Son:** It was about homework and a question that I was stuck on. It was something to do with glands, so I found the information that way.

**Researcher:** So have you every clicked onto the Internet and found something that has been more like what you see in the magazines?

**Son:** Sometimes yes, by mistake. I do just normally ask my mum questions if I need to find something out.

**Researcher:** So I know that you have not watched the CD together this week, but would you say watching the Sense CD will have helped with how you talk about sex within the family in the future?

**Mother:** I am sure there are going to be questions that come from it and I will talk to him if I think he maybe needing to know something, but we will try and make some time to watch the CD together again this week whilst we have it.

**Researcher:** Well thank you very much and I will see you again next week.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Family Interview for Study One

**Participants:** Female parent is divorced nurse (38 years) and has 2 Daughters (15 and 10 years). Fifteen year old daughter took part in this study.

**Consent form signed and retained by the family and researcher.**

**Demographics questionnaire also completed by the family.**

**Researcher:** Thank you. I would also like to ask each of you to fill out the '*Knowledge Quiz*' and put a percentage beside about how sure you are of the answer you have given.

**Knowledge quiz completed by all and kept by the researcher.**

**Researcher:** Before we start I would like to say '*Thank you*' for taking part in the study and give you a brief description of what the study involves. I am interested in knowing how families communicate sex and relationships within the family context. I would firstly like to ask to ask the young person what sex education they have received.

**Daughter:** Just had the period talks in year 7 (aged 11/12 years). We also got told about how the body works, but I am not sure if that is sex education.

**Researcher:** Was there anyone who came in and gave outside talks or perhaps a sex education roadshow?

**Daughter:** No, we had someone come in to talk about work experience, but that wasn't anything to do with sex education.

**Researcher:** So who has taught the sex education you have received at school?

**Daughter:** The school nurse mainly, I guess.

**Daughter shy when answering the questions.**

**Mother:** Did you not see a video one? I thought you had said that you had seen a video or something.

**Daughter:** I don't remember, but I do know that the sex education I have had has mainly been taught by the nurse. She brings videos and things like that in, but it was mostly in year 7.

**Researcher:** Right. So do you have any sex education now? Say through PSHE lessons?

**Daughter:** Don't get any of these now.

**Researcher:** So at the age of 15, why do you think you do not get any sex education?

**Daughter:** I think that they think we know it all now based on what we got taught in year 7.

**Researcher:** Okay. So who would you say you would talk to if you wanted to find out something about sex that you did not know?

**Daughter:** I don't know really.

**Researcher:** Would you talk to your mum?

**Daughter:** No. Hesitation, I don't know really.

**Researcher:** What about your friends?

**Daughter:** Yes, mainly my mum and friends.

**Researcher:** So if say you were talking to your mum about sex and you learnt something, would you talk to your friends about it?

**Daughter:** Yes, I suppose so.

**Researcher:** So you say that you have learnt about sex and things associated with sex from school, but are there anything else you would still like to know more about?

**Daughter:** Not really, no.

**Researcher:** So, ideally who would you like to mainly teach you about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** The school nurse again.

**Researcher:** So would you not prefer for teachers to teach you about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** Well, either or, but be taught at school, not at home.

**Researcher:** So what sorts of sexual matters would you talk about with your friends?

**Daughter:** Nothing, really.

**Researcher:** So I know these days we think of some boy friends as just males who are our friends, rather than boyfriends, but would you talk to friends of the opposite sex about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** No, I can't say I have ever talked to a boy about sexual matters.

**Researcher:** So what sorts of things would you say you learn more about when talking to your friends?

**Daughter:** Don't know really.

**Researcher:** So mum can I ask you what sex education you had when you were at school?

**Mother:** Yes, I think we had a talk and a video with the school nurse.

**Researcher:** So, you had a talk?

**Mother:** Yes, also a talk about periods and it was more about how the body developed, more than anything else.

**Daughter:** Yes, that's we got as well.

**Researcher:** So, young person you haven't had any sex education that involves relationships, and sex within a relationship?

**Daughter:** No, but we had one about pregnancy though, which just showed how the baby grew and watched this woman giving birth on a video.

**Researcher:** So mum, who taught you about this sex education?

**Mother:** I think it was the school nurse.

**Researcher:** So did your parents talk to you about sex or give you any sex education?

**Mother:** Em, well I would say I talked to my mum quite a lot when I was younger. I can't really remember. I don't know it is hard because I have one older sister and two younger ones and I think we shared it all with us all being around the same age. If I think back I suppose we all talked to each other about it.

**Researcher:** What age was sex education taught to you?

**Mother:** About eleven I think.

**Researcher:** Was there things you were told about that you felt you wanted to know more about?

**Mother:** I can't really remember. Em no, I don't think so because like I say I learnt a lot from home and I talked to my mother quite a lot. The biggest thing I remember about was that if you had sex, you would get pregnant, but there was very little about diseases or contraception, or very little about your body being ready for sex. It was very much about you just don't do it, that's what I remember. It was more about the fear associated with sex in my day.

**Researcher:** So how would you compare your sex education compared with your daughters?

**Mother:** To be truthful, I don't think it was any different. I mean I know my daughter had a talk, but my son has just started with his sex education three weeks ago. He was telling me about it and how the body develops and how girls have periods, but I think realistic now they should go into it more about diseases, contraception and really

relationships, peer pressure. This is what they need to know more about. A lot of the body stuff is going to happen, but how do kids know what is appropriate in a relationship and how they should keep themselves safe.

**Researcher:** So you would say it is still more the biology side rather than relationships, consequences of peer pressure and ...

**Mother:** Yes, very much so. I mean I have talked to my daughter about having sex and things associated with relationships, but it doesn't seem to get back up or reinforced in school to let kids know what they should be doing and what they shouldn't be doing, but they still need the information.

**Researcher:** So who would initiate the conversation about sex?

**Mother:** Well I will tend to bring it up with her more, than her coming to me. You know if boyfriends are on the scene and things like that then I talk to her about it, even though she will say "*Oh mum, do you have to talk about that?*"

**Researcher:** So do you (daughter) get embarrassed talking about sex?

**Daughter:** Yes.

**Researcher:** So who do you feel most embarrassed about when talking about sex?

**Daughter puts her head down.**

**Researcher:** Do you get embarrassed talking to your friends about sex?

**Daughter:** No.

**Mother:** I think it is ... pause ... because she is not in a relationship or a sexual one she doesn't want to talk about it. And I know that she isn't in one, but I think if she was she would be more inclined to talk about sex more.

**Researcher:** So would you say talk about things when they are going to happen?

**Mother:** Well no. I mean we have talked about sex and things like that and I will ask if she knows of anyone in her year that is having sex. Then she will say '*No*'.

**Daughter:** No, I tell you if I know someone is.

**Mother:** Yes, and then what do I say to you?

**Daughter:** Are they pregnant?

**Mother:** No, I ask if any of your friends are. And that is when I go on and find out more. I am quite open with her and I feel that if she was concerned about something, she would come and talk to me. But I will say to her '*I know what goes on when your 15, I was 15 once*', and this is how I get around it with anything. I don't think it is just this way when talking about sex, it is everything.

**Researcher:** So what sorts of things would you talk about when communicating sexual matters? Have you talked about contraception, say?

**Mother:** Well I don't think it is appropriate that she should be having sex with anybody at her age because she isn't ready for it, especially not emotionally? I have sort of discussed that with her, haven't I?

**Silence. Daughter puts her head down.**

**Researcher:** She is getting embarrassed. So have you talked about things like sexuality and issues like that with your daughter?

**Mother:** Well we have sort of talked about it when it has come up.

**Daughter:** Yes, like on Big Brother.

**Mother:** Well yes, but if my daughter is gay it makes no difference to me and she knows that and we do talk about it when it comes up on television. I mean you can't help but



have to talk to kids about it because it is everywhere you look on television, even on things like soaps. So I don't see how people can avoid talking about it.

**Researcher:** So when you talk to your daughter about sex are there ever times when you wouldn't discuss certain issues?

**Mother:** Not really. I mean I wouldn't discuss certain things about sex in front of her younger brother, but I will pull her to a side and say we need to have a talk about something and then we would discuss it then, but I would not say that there is anything that we haven't discussed about sexual matters. But generally I would say we discuss it in everyday conversation and that's the way I am with my son as well. There are just certain things he doesn't need to be hearing us talk about when he is only 11. I know we can discuss some things in front of him, but he is an immature 11 year old, so some things are not appropriate.

**Researcher:** So within your family you would say you are open about discussing sex and sexual matters?

**Mother and Daughter:** Yes.

**Researcher:** I know it might seem I am duplicating some of the questions I am asking, but I am just getting clarity of what you are telling me. I mean some families do find it hard to discuss sexual matters; especially sexuality and some parents tend to assume that this is taught at school. I mean have you been taught about sexuality or masturbation at school.

**Daughter:** No, but if anyone does ask questions like that they get in to trouble for even mentioning the word. I think the school nurse is the only one at school who would probably discuss it, but she hasn't talked to us about it, even.

**Researcher:** So do you think your family is the norm when discussing sexual matters?

**Mother:** I don't know really, what do you think?

**Researcher:** I mean do your friend's family discuss sexual matters like you do with your mum?

**Daughter:** Yes, I think they do.

**Mother:** You see with what she tells me I think they are a lot more open about a lot of things really compared to how we were. I mean when I was younger and you started your period you didn't tell anyone because it was embarrassing, but these days their on the phone talking about the changes they are experiences while they are developing. I mean I don't know her friends are not having sex, but I know she isn't, because I know what she does and I just don't think at the moment there is any of her friends in the group she is in doing it. I don't think I am being naïve in that either but we have a trusting relationship and she knows she can tell me anything, but if she lies to me that's what I don't want. She can come to me and tell me anything and I would hope that when the time does come that she will come and talk to me.

**Researcher:** So would you say the media has a lot to do with how you talk about sex?

**Daughter:** Yes.

**Mother:** Well it is just so open isn't it?

**Researcher:** You would say it does?

**Daughter:** Yes, with the television and that like Big Brother, magazines as well.

**Mother:** Yes and even on the soaps at 7:30pm. You just can't get away from it.

**Researcher:** You said about magazines and the impact they have.

**Daughter:** Yes in that they show you what celebs get up to and a lot of this information is sexually orientated, such as Jordan being a glamour model, but she is now a singer and presented. It is also how they look as they start some of the fashions that we all follow.

**Mother:** I mean sometimes I pick up the magazines that she reads and I think '*Oh my god*'.

**Daughter:** I put '*No*' on that questionnaire when it said about learning from magazines, but I suppose I do because I read the problems pages and read about other people dealt with life when being a teenager.

**Researcher:** So would you say when talking about how the media educate young people that it is through magazines and the television or would you say that you used computers to educate yourself?

**Daughter:** No, not computers. It is just the television and magazines.

**Researcher:** So would you say that the media is the way you would like to learn about sexual matters, or from your mum, or school perhaps?

**Daughter:** A bit of both. You can learn a lot from them when you put them all together.

**Researcher:** So you said before that you think the media have a big part to play in what sex education young people learn about. Do you think that is a good thing?

**Daughter:** I don't know really. Sometimes not, but I don't know.

**Mother:** Well I think there is just no way of getting away from it, is there? Its everywhere, so I don't suppose it is easy to say whether it is a good thing, or a bad thing. I think they have just grown up with that so its normal isn't it. Where when I was younger it was quite hidden, but it isn't now.

**Researcher:** So do you think it is a good thing or a bad thing?

**Mother:** Well part of me does and part of me doesn't. I mean I think we should be more open and kids do need to know the whole picture, but there are still issues in that there is a right developmental time for them to know certain things. What I mean by this is the media are quite explicit and I don't think that is educating kids properly. They need to know the facts and how to manage these rather than I don't know seeing people naked in an inappropriate manner and I think this is sometimes where the media are going wrong.

**Researcher:** What sorts of things would you regard as explicit?

**Mother:** Well pornography and things like that. I mean you can go on a computer and access a lot of inappropriate stuff that is not educational regarding sex. It paints the wrong messages, but some young people may use this as sex education and I think it is wrong.

**Researcher:** Brilliant. Well thank you for your comments, but may I now ask you to explore the Sense CD?

**Mother:** What sections do you want us to look at?

**Researcher:** Well if you and your daughter can explore the sections that you would like to look at that would be great. Even if you explore a few now I can leave the CD with you and then I could ask you more questions next week then that would be great.

Mother and Daughter sit down to watch the CD. The daughter controls the computer and starts to look aimlessly through the different sections. Once she knows what is on each, she moves to another section. The mother says '*Let's just look at one in detail rather than just flicking through the sections*'.

The mother and daughter go through the relationships section. Although they did not talk, they were sat close together and were interested in the topic and different scenarios.

After exploring the Sense CD for over 45 minutes (computer crashed twice) the researcher asked the mother and daughter to complete the '*Knowledge quiz*' again, and then asked the following questions.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD initially?

**Daughter:** It was good. It gave you any information that you needed.

**Researcher:** And what did you think (mum)?

**Mother:** Yes, I thought it was good also and I think it is really good in that kids can go through the sections that are most important to them, but it did give what I see as correct information, whereby the facts were given.

**Researcher:** So what aspects of the CD did you like the most?

**Mother:** Well I think it was the variety of the sections that you could go into. We will have to go through it in more detail, but on first seeing it I think it seems to cover all of the things they need to know about.

**Daughter:** The videos were really good as you could understand where they were coming from. I also liked how they used characters rather than real people most of the time.

**Researcher:** So what age group would you say the CD would be good for?

**Daughter:** Any really, but mainly 11-15 years of age.

**Mother:** I would say about that, yes.

**Researcher:** Were there any aspects of the CD that you clicked onto and thought you would like to look at it when you were alone?

**Mother:** Well I noticed she didn't go on the sex and relationships section and I think she would rather do that herself.

**Daughter:** I would, but I would still talk to you about things that I see on the CD.

**Researcher:** So are there any parts of the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Mother:** No, I wouldn't say so, would you?

**Daughter:** No, not really from what I have seen.

**Mother:** I mean it is only last week she was crying about splitting up with her boyfriend who she had been seeing for three weeks, so I can see why she didn't want to click onto the sex and relationship section.

**Researcher:** So would you prefer to talk to your mum about sexual issues, rather than the CD?

**Daughter:** Prefer the CD.

**Researcher:** Why?

**Daughter:** Because you can just go through it by yourself, and have privacy. You don't feel embarrassed either when looked at the different sections.

**Researcher:** So would you say that over time the CD would help families talk more openly about sexual issues?

**Daughter:** Yes, definitely.

**Mother:** Yes, they probably would flick through and find information, but at their own pace rather than the information being pushed upon them.

**Researcher:** Well that has been brilliant, but do you mind if I can come back next week and ask you further questions about the CD and give clarity for anything that we have discussed this week?

**Mother and daughter:** No, that's fine.

**On return the researcher asked the following questions to the daughter.**

**Researcher:** You said last week that the sex education you had received from school was in year 7 however, did you think that after this education you knew all there was to know about sex and relationships, and that this prepared you for adult life?

**Daughter:** Yes, that's what I remember.

**Researcher:** Okay and would you say you were satisfied with that education or were there still things you still wanted to know?

**Daughter:** Not really, no. I knew what I think was important.

**Researcher:** You said you talked to your mum and friends about sexual matters, but do you get embarrassed talking about sex? If so, why?

**Daughter:** Yes. It is not necessarily the act of sex, but I do get embarrassed when people ask about my personal feelings on sex and the relationships I have.

**Researcher:** What more do you think schools can do to improve the sex education for young people?

**Daughter:** Give them that CD.

**Researcher:** You said last week that you do not use computers to educate yourself about sexual matters, but after using the CD do you think young people can benefit from computers to educate themselves about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** Yes. I liked it and I would use it if it was available because it gives you facts and examples of what happens to young people, but I would not go on the Internet or something like that to learn about things to do with sex.

**Researcher:** What would you like to see happen to improve sex education for young people in this day and age? What do you see as the ideal?

**Mother:** To give sex education on a continuous basis and not just hit and miss, like it is now. I just don't think you can teach all that is needed to be known about sex in one year, plus people forget things so it would be better if it was taught every year over a matter of weeks.

**On return the researcher asked the following questions to the mother.**

**Researcher:** I know you (the mother) didn't have much sex education at school and you learnt much of it from your mum and sisters, but was there anything to do with sex education you didn't get told that you would have liked to have known? What I mean by this was the sex education you were given adequate, and given at the right time for you development or do you feel you needed to know the sex education at an earlier time than it was given?

**Mother:** Well I think it wasn't as good for us as it is for young people today. But I think because we (mother and daughter) have a trusting relationship where we can talk to each other about anything. But what do you feel?

**Daughter:** Yes, I think we do as well.

**Researcher:** Okay, but do you feel the sex education you received prepared you for adult life?

**Mother:** Well like I say when we were younger it was pretty much don't have sex or you will get pregnant. There was nothing about sexual diseases and basically I come from a Catholic family and my mum just told us say 'No'. Where now after watching that CD kids don't say no, do they? And I was quite surprised, I mean I thought young people could get contraception under the age of 16, but I didn't realise it was that common. Where when we were kids it was usually if you had sex, you would get pregnant. That's

how I remember it, so I think the openness is better for kids now compared to what it was like for us.

**Researcher:** Yes, and with you coming from a Catholic background, what do you think makes you more liberal compared with some other Catholic parents?

**Mother:** Because I think that I grew up with a lot of Catholic guilt, and I don't want it to be that was for my kids. Because I think realistically when you get taught like that and you have a sexual relationship, you feel bad about it, and feel guilty and bad about yourself when really sex is normal and kids should be taught it is normal to have feelings. Kids have enough to cope with when growing up they don't need to feel guilt or feel ashamed of themselves. I just don't want my kids growing up like I did. I want them to have feelings and I want them to know what is out there that is going to make their lives easier. I also don't want my kids to feel embarrassed about going through puberty and growing up, because it is normal. I mean I could talk to my mum about sex, but it was just the whole culture in how we grew up that made it difficult to sometimes talk about sex and relationships. There was no variety, but instead very strict guidelines and for all I want my kids to have guidelines, I don't want them to be afraid of talking to me about anything.

**Researcher:** So do you think religion has an impact on how you behave sexually?

**Mother:** Well yes I think it does, and has, and I don't always think it is a good thing, so in our family I try not to let it be that way. I mean I do think religion can have a big impact on the way people behave and it did for me, but I would like to think that with the way the world is now religion is not a big factor for young people. They can't afford to let it be that way because they need to learn so much, so quickly and I think young people, regardless of their religious beliefs know that and therefore shouldn't feel guilty for living their own lives and doing what they want to do, but they need to do it safely and at the right time for them.

**Researcher:** What would you like to see happen to improve sex education for young people in this day and age? What do you see as the ideal?

**Mother:** I mean it is like I said last week I haven't really given it that much thought, but after watching that CD I think that would be a really good idea for schools to use. Something like that where they are not forced to sit and listen, but where they have access to it so they can go and look at it different sections that they find interesting. I think sometimes when sex education is taught as school they sit and giggle and make a laugh of it, so I think well what are they taking in, and what are they learning? I think there has to be some facility they where they can go and learn about sex education in private, but whereby it is still pretty censored really.

**Researcher:** Thank you for your openness and honesty. I would now like to ask a few questions about the CD. What did you think of the Sense CD overall?

**Daughter:** I thought it was good.

**Mother:** Yes, so did I. I must admit I did not know what to expect and there was bits in there that I did not know about, such as the under 16 clinics and I didn't realise kids were actually having sex and relationships at that age. I also think it was good how it was broken down into the different sections and I think they would probably learn more through watching the CD, rather than sitting down in a formal way to learn about sex education, like they do at school. I know kids learn different things at different ages, but the CD allows them to learn at the time that it suits them, which I think is better.

**Researcher:** And what about you (daughter). What did you think to the CD?

**Daughter:** Well the same as my mum really, but I liked the way you could go through the sections and click on the examples because it gives you an idea of what to do if you were in one of those situations.

**Researcher:** So you liked the scenarios, which goes back to something you said last week about reading the problem pages in magazines in that you might not be in that situation, but it gives you the knowledge needed to think what you would do if you were.

**Daughter:** Yes.

**Researcher:** So what aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Daughter:** The videos were good, and they gave you ideas of how to manage in certain situations.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Daughter:** All really because they all gave really good information.

**Mother:** Yes, I agree with her in that the situation where the girl went for emergency contraception, this was really good, but some kids might not know this is this is where I thought the all aspects of the CD were good because they all gave advice and relevant information that is needed. I think also the messages were good in that if they needed to go to a clinic, it is not a scary place where kids are condemned for having sex under age sex, but many kids probably don't know this.

**Researcher:** Was there any aspects of the CD that you didn't like?

**Mother:** No, I really liked it even though I had no prior expectations of what I thought it might contain. But I thought it was really informative in a non-condemning way. What about you?

**Daughter:** Yes, I mainly just thought all of it was really good and I wish we had it in our school.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Mother:** From about 11 onwards.

**Daughter:** The same, really.

**Mother:** Do you not think younger.

**Daughter:** No.

**Researcher:** Was there any aspect of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Daughter:** No, not really.

**Mother:** I thought the '*sexual fantasies*' one was a bit '*WOO*', but when you watched it, it was pretty tame, but it just when you hear the term you don't know what to expect.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Mother:** Well yes, sexual fantasies haven't come up in conversation.

Both laugh.

**Researcher:** So would you rather talk to your mum about sexual matters rather than use something like this CD?

**Daughter:** No, I would use the CD mainly.

**Researcher:** So why would you prefer to use the CD rather than talk to your mum?

**Daughter:** Some of the things on the CD are private to people so I would look at the CD for private things to do with deep feelings, but then also talk to my mum about other things that I still needed to know.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Daughter:** Yes, because you learn things on the CD that I can go and talk to my mum about.

**Mother:** Definitely. Can I have the details because this maybe useful for my younger son?

**Researcher:** Yes, by all means. May I ask before I leave that you complete the follow-up sexual knowledge questionnaire? Once completed ... I would like to say a sincere thank you to you both for having me and being so open and honest in the interviews. The family were then de-briefed regarding the purpose behind the research.

## 4<sup>th</sup> Family Interview for Study I

**Participants:** Female parent – student (36 years) and has 2 daughters (13 years and 9) and absent father. Thirteen year old daughter participating in this interview.

**Consent form signed and retained by the family and researcher.**

**Demographics questionnaire also completed by the family.**

**Researcher:** Thank you. I would also like to ask each of you to fill out the '*Knowledge Quiz*' and put a percentage beside about how sure you are of the answer you have given to being correct.

**Knowledge quiz completed by all and kept by the researcher.**

**Researcher:** Before we start I would like to say '*Thank you*' for taking part in the study and give you a brief description of what the study involves. I am interested in knowing how families communicate sex and relationships within the family context. I would firstly like to ask to ask the young person what sex education she has received.

**Daughter:** At primary school we had a video on what sex was and then in year 7 (age 11-12 years) at secondary school someone came in and talked to us about contraception and periods. In science we learnt about the rest of it about the organs and the act.

**Researcher:** Was there anyone who came in and gave outside talks or perhaps a sex education roadshow?

**Daughter:** No, it was all given in year 7.

**Mother:** Have you not touched on it again in biology?

**Daughter:** No.

**Researcher:** So who has taught you the most about sex education?

**Daughter:** My mum.

**Researcher:** Right. So do you have any sex education now? Say through PSHE lessons?

**Daughter:** Don't get any now.

**Mother:** Are these questions just for her?

**Researcher:** Yes, but you can add things if you would like to.

**Mother:** I just want to try and help her jog her memory. But you did something like citizenship and I was wondering did that not include some SRE?

**Daughter:** No, that was just drugs.

**Researcher:** You said there about having SRE at the age of eleven/twelve, but can you remember what age you were when you're mum started talking to you about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** She told me about nine I think, and then when I hear things at school I come and talk to my mum about it.

**Mother:** Can I just help jog her memory here, again? Do you remember when I was pregnant with your sister; we talked about sexual things then didn't we? Remember when you were only three years, four years old and you asked about the baby and how it got in there. I know I talked to you differently then to how I did when you were nine, but that was sex education. So can you remember when sex education was first introduced and what we talked about?

**Daughter:** Yes, I can remember briefly, but I was very young mum.

**Mother:** Aw, I know sweetheart, I don't mean to interrupt but I was trying to help you remember. But you did ask about babies and that I talked to you about babies, family and



relationships, right from back then, so you have asked and I have always told you the facts and tried to help you understand these things as you have been growing up.

**Researcher:** So who would you say initiated these conversations about sexual matters?

**Mother:** Well she (the daughter) would ask questions and I would explain the answers to her and then she would be okay and would just go off and play, so she has always asked if she wanted to know something, but we talk a lot so I maybe tell her things about sexual matters just in conversation as we are talking about sometimes quite general things. So, I suppose a bit of both, really.

**Researcher:** Great.

**Mother:** Can I just also add I remember when I was pregnant and I took her (the daughter) to see the nurse for her health check up and the nurse was talking to me and just gave her a pen and a piece of paper. She has always been arty and whilst we were talking she drew a picture of a stick man, with this big belly, and she had drawn a baby inside this big tummy. I still have the picture, but the nurse had said to her at the age of three, what is this? And she explained that she was going to have a baby sister who is not ready yet because mummy has to help her grow and that's why she is warm and safe inside mummy's tummy. She was dumb-founded with the details she gave, so I suppose she probably knew from about three years old, or as young as she was when understanding things that I told her.

**Daughter:** Yes and when I was little I thought that the baby came out of mummy's belly button, but she told me how my sister is too big to come out of there and she told me the right place where the baby was going to come out.

**Both laughed.**

**Mother:** But can I just add that I remember what it was like for me and what my mum told me and I just wanted to be open and honest with my children and I hope that that is the way it is. I just thought if she asks me a question then I will give the right answer and tell her the truth to satisfy what she wants to know and I had this one by caesarean so I showed her the little cut and explained that that was where she came from and that was the truth. But then when I had my younger daughter by normal birth I wanted to tell her the truth as well but there was something on the television one day and I had gone out and left my mother babysitting.

**Daughter:** Yes, I remember this.

**Mother:** Do you when you nana was babysitting and on the television someone was about to give birth at home and she had said to my mum and dad '*She needs to go to hospital and get that baby out*' and my mum had said '*well she is going to have the baby at home*'. Well this one (the daughter) couldn't understand that because she thought that you need to cut the tummy to get the baby out and that's what I had told her at that point. So my mum had said that this one needed to talk to me about it. So when I came in and my mum had told me about the conversation, I thought right I am going to have to tell her about it and add a bit more to what she already knew and I explained that they don't always come out of the tummy and one thing lead onto the other and that was like a big session of sex education because we talked all about other things as well, such as periods, but when I told my mother she was horrified and thought she did not think that she needed to be knowing these things at the age of 8/9 years old.

**Daughter:** But I did need to know them.

**Mother:** Well that's right you do because you are clever and you will ask, so I just tell you, don't I?

**Daughter:** Yes, we were just sat there for hours talking about it.

**They both smile and cuddle each other.**

**Researcher:** So your daughter initiated the conversation with you but do you ever initiate the conversation on sexual matters if you think she needs to know something?

**Mother:** Aw yes, she talks to me, but I talk to her as well, so I suppose we both initiate the conversations.

**Researcher:** So do you find it embarrassing to talk about sexual matters?

**Mother:** I don't.

**Daughter:** Not really, but sometimes I do, so a bit of both really.

**Researcher:** So, what things do you find embarrassing to discuss?

**Daughter:** I don't find everything embarrassing, but talking about the act can be a bit embarrassing at times. It is more when people use slang terms at school and you sort of know what it means but you are not quite sure.

**Researcher:** So are you saying you feel embarrassed if you do not know the meaning of a word?

**Daughter:** Yes, because they (peers at school) are all laughing about it.

**Researcher:** So how do you find out the meaning of these slang terms?

**Daughter:** I just ask my mum, because I can trust her and she won't say anything to other people.

**Mother:** Yes and if I don't know the answer I will find it out and then explain it to you properly, don't I? I know other mums with kids in their early teens so I will drop it into the conversation when talking to them as though I don't know and then I will tell her so nobody knows that I am asking for her (the daughter). This way she doesn't get embarrassed and she still finds out the answer to what she asked me about.

**Daughter:** Yes.

**Researcher:** Aw, that's lovely. So who would you prefer to teach you about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** My mum because I couldn't talk to teachers about stuff.

**Researcher:** So what sorts of sexual matters would you talk to your friends about?

**Daughter:** Nothing. I don't talk to them about it. On a night time when we go out they might talk about it, but I don't because I am not that way inclined.

**Researcher:** So mum, who taught you about this sex education when you were at school?

**Mother:** I can't remember anything from primary school, but when I was about 13/14 years old we had a little bit about the body in biology, nothing to do with relationships and STIs and then we had someone come in and gave us free Tampax and towels, just about periods really. That was it and sex wasn't talked about again at school. I can't even remember contraception being taught.

**Researcher:** So did your parents talk to you about sex or give you any sex education?

**Mother:** I could talk to my mum about some things, but not others, so I would talk to my friends mainly about sexual matters.

**Researcher:** So what things could you talk to your mum about and what things couldn't you discuss?

**Mother:** With my mum it was about periods, but we didn't talk about sex until I was in a stable relationship at about the age of 16 and then she would tell me bits about

contraception, but she didn't like talking about it. There were also things she didn't know as well, but we never discussed sex when my dad was around.

**Daughter:** That's like my dad. He gets embarrassed talking about sex and he just hides behind his newspaper.

**Researcher:** So why do you think your dad doesn't talk to you about sex?

**Daughter:** Not sure really.

**Mother:** I think it is more to do with the fact that he works away a lot and misses a lot of the talks we have, so he doesn't become involved. But I don't think that was it with my dad, I mean he would get embarrassed with me breast feeding which is one of the most natural acts between a mother and her child, but he would just walk away. The thing with my husband as well is that he comes from a big Catholic family and I don't think his parents would have told him anything about sex. He must have got it from somewhere, but I would put money on it that it would not have come from his parents.

**Researcher:** Were there things you were told about that you felt you wanted to know more about?

**Mother:** Yes, there were lots of things that I still wanted to know, especially with regards to contraception.

**Researcher:** So how would you compare your sex education compared with your daughters?

**Mother:** It is more, but I don't think they teach it for long enough. I think they should not just do it in year 7 and leave it at that, the education needs to be reinforced. They also need to focus on relationships, stereotypes and peer pressure and basically have somewhere where young people can go to get advice and guidance if they are unsure about things. My daughters can come to me, but a lot of kids don't have that, which is sad.

**Researcher:** So within your family would say you are open about discussing sex and sexual matters?

**Mother and Daughter:** Yes.

**Mother:** Maybe too much at times according to my mother, but I think I am just preparing them and make it just part of everyday life.

**Researcher:** So do you think your family is the norm when discussing sexual matters?

**Mother:** In this generation then maybe yes, but I think now we go into depth when talking about it and I want better for my children than I had.

**Daughter:** Yes, I think I have a closer relationship with my mum compared to what my friends have, but they talk to each other more than I would talk to them.

**Researcher:** So at what age would you say you want your children to know about sexual matters?

**Mother:** I don't think there is a set age. I think we need to just satisfy what they are asking about, but without scaring them and if they go into more depth I will talk to them more in a manner they will understand.

**Researcher:** So would you say your family talks openly about sex?

**Mother:** My family, meaning us four?

**Researcher:** Yes.

**Mother:** I would like my husband to be involved more, but I think that is just because he is embarrassed and tends to leave it to me. If he was at home more I think he would be more involved if the girls asked questions when we were both together as a mum and dad,

so I think that has something to do with it. But I do feel that as we are they ask me questions and I do give the correct answers or if I didn't know I would find out for them, so I do think we are quite open, yes.

**Daughter:** I think we are, but I am not sure I would ask dad some of the questions I ask you, even if he was here more. Even though I love my dad, we can sit and talk for hours about anything, so we just tend to drop things like sex into the conversation, even if we are talking about other things and I like that.

**Mother:** Me too sweetheart, and we will always do it.

**Researcher:** So can I ask what forms of the media do you use to educate yourself about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** Books and a bit off the television.

**Mother:** Do you think that when you watch something on television that that gives you ideas of the sorts of questions you come and ask me?

**Daughter:** Sometimes, if I don't understand something.

**Mother:** You also look at girly magazines and then you ask me questions.

**Daughter:** Aw yes, like the problem pages. They are good as it gives you an idea of how people cope with different situations.

**Researcher:** Do you prefer to use these forms of the media to learn about SRE?

**Daughter:** No, I would rather talk to my mum.

**Researcher:** So what impact do you think the media have in educating young people about SRE?

**Daughter:** Don't know really. They make you question things, but they don't give you all the answers and explain it like mum would, but you could read about things in books to get the answers, so it is all of it really that helps you learn things about sex.

**Researcher:** So do you think the media is a good or a bad thing with regard to sex education?

**Daughter:** Depends what it is really because some can be a bit crude and some can generate questions and give scenarios about how to manage situations.

**Mother:** But would you say the media were good in that if someone didn't have a mum to ask like you, do you think the media would be a good way of educating yourself about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** Yes, it is probably good for them, but I think the media on its own is not a good source. People would need to read about things in books or ask a person they trust and feel close to get the right information and help.

**Researcher:** Brilliant. Well thank you for your comments, but may I now ask you to explore the Sense CD?

Mother and Daughter sit down to watch the CD. They both sit close to each other and mother puts her hand on daughters shoulder. They both use controls to look at different things, but are keen to go through it together and look at the sections in more details.

The mother and daughter go through the following sections:-

- ❖ Relationships section - although they did not talk, they were sat close together and were interested in the topic and different scenarios.
- ❖ Virtual clinic.

Due to time commitments within the family the mother and daughter were only able to explore the Sense CD for about 15 minutes. The researcher then asked the mother and daughter to complete the '*Knowledge quiz*' again, and then asked the following questions.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD initially?

**Daughter:** I thought it was really good. It was really well set out and the information that was given was just what young people want to know at my age, and younger.

**Researcher:** And what did you think (mum)?

**Mother:** Well it wasn't quite what I was expecting, I thought it would have been more like a video, but it was better than that; I thought it was really good.

**Researcher:** So what aspects of the CD did you like the most?

**Mother:** I thought the quiz was really good. It would allow young people to go away and find the answers if they got the question wrong, but all the answers are on the CD itself.

**Daughter:** I don't think any one section was better than any other, but combined it was really good. The quiz was good though in respect that if you did get a question wrong you could go and find the correct answer yourself, and then you remember it more.

**Researcher:** So what age group would you say the CD would be good for?

**Daughter:** I think anywhere from age 11 upwards.

**Mother:** Age 11 or 12 perhaps, but I think children should be introduced to those topics at a younger age. Just in a way that they understand for their age and maturity.

**Researcher:** Were there any aspects of the CD that you clicked onto and thought you would like to look at it when you were alone?

**Daughter:** No, I wouldn't say so.

**Mother:** No, I don't think so with what we have just seen.

**Researcher:** So are there any parts of the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Mother:** Probably odd things, like different terminology for different things.

**Daughter:** Yes, the buzzwords were good. This is what I was saying before in the fact of sometimes not knowing all the slang terms for different things, so I think that was really good.

**Researcher:** So would you prefer to talk to your mum about sexual issues, rather than the CD?

**Daughter:** Yes.

**Researcher:** Why?

**Daughter:** I just want to talk to my mum, because we are close and I can talk to her about personal stuff, rather than other people.

**Researcher:** So would you say that over time the CD would help families talk more openly about sexual issues?

**Daughter:** Yes.

**Mother:** Yes, because different aspects of the CD also prompt parents to discuss things that they think their children need to know.

**Researcher:** Well that has been brilliant, but do you mind if I can come back next week and ask you further questions about the CD and give clarity for anything that we have discussed this week?

**Mother and daughter:** No that's fine.

**A week later the researcher revisits the family in their home and asks the mother and daughter to complete the follow-up sexual knowledge questionnaire before asking the following questions.**

**Researcher:** I would just like to clarify that since year 7 you have not received any sex education at school?

**Daughter:** That's right.

**Researcher:** Is there anything you still want the school to teach you about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** There was at the time but I have talked to my mum about it since, so I am okay now.

**Researcher:** How do you think the school could have improved the sex education you have received?

**Daughter:** Don't think so for me. But some young people who can't talk to their mum would need to know about contraception, where to get it from and where to get help and advice if you don't have that at home.

**Researcher:** How do you feel about the sex education your daughter has received and how do you think the school could have done it better?

**Daughter:** They could explain more and use different things like the CD. They teach it in a boring way and need to make it more fun, so people remember more about what they are being taught.

**Mother:** I just think it should be continuous. You can't teach all about sex education in one or two lessons. I think they also need to be teaching more about contraception and what options are available for young people if they are in a situation that they don't know how to deal with. It would be good if they had drop-in sessions so young people can get confidential advice, if they do need it. The education seems all itty-bitty and in no structured way because to be honest I don't think the sex education has improved much since I was at school. They may touch on subjects we were not taught about, but they are still not giving all the information young people need to be knowing about.

**Researcher:** You talked about your husband's religion last week, but would you say he has passed his religious beliefs off onto the children regarding conversations about sex?

**Mother:** No. He may have brought up as a Catholic, but he is not a practising Catholic now and he doesn't hold their views, either.

**Researcher:** What would you like to see in relation to how sex is taught at school from a primary and secondary level? What do you think would be ideal sex education for children and young people?

**Mother:** I think they need to involve parents more and tell us what they are teaching our children so we can back up the information at home. Parents may not always feel comfortable about talking about sex with their children because they may not know the answers, like I didn't with some of the things on the CD, but if parents know what sex education is being taught to their children, they can try and prepare around it.

**Researcher:** Okay, thank you for that, but can I just ask what did you think of the Sense CD now you have had chance to look at it in more detail?

**Daughter:** I still think it is really good.

**Mother:** Me too.

**Researcher:** So what aspects of the CD did you like the most?

**Daughter:** All of it really. It is really good that when using the CD you can go at your own pace.

**Mother:** I think the main thing that I thought was good was that you can go at your own pace, but if you already know something you can just move to another section that you want to go through, rather than going over sections that would become boring if you already know the answers to.

**Researcher:** So what age group would you say the CD would be good for?

**Daughter:** I think some of the sections could be used from about the age of 9 or 10, just encase young people start puberty early. They need to know what is going to start happening to them, before it happens.

**Mother:** I agree. The more I watched it the more I thought that some of the sections would be useful for my 9 year old daughter. Not all sections, but the one about the body and feelings would be really good for her. She doesn't talk as openly about things as my oldest daughter, so I think it would be a good way of opening up the conversation between me and her.

**Researcher:** What age would you say it would not become useful? What is the cut-off age?

**Daughter:** Don't know really. Probably about 18 years of age.

**Mother:** I don't think there is a cut-off age. There were things on the CD that I did not know, so I think it is useful for parents to get the up-to-date information, especially with regards to where they can get contraception from. I think it would be good also for the things that sometimes as parents we forget about. I will have learnt a lot about the different things on the CD, but everyone forgets things, even parents.

**Researcher:** Were there any aspects of the CD that you clicked onto and thought you would like to look at it when you were alone?

**Mother:** No.

**Daughter:** No, I don't think so, either. The thing about the CD is that it is not promoting sexual activity, it is just giving facts and really good information on different situations that I think many of us will have all been in sometime when growing-up.

**Researcher:** So are there any parts of the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Mother:** Masturbation (mother and daughter both laugh). We have talked about it now though with watching the CD.

**Daughter:** We had a laugh about that.

**Researcher:** So would you prefer to talk to your mum about sexual issues, rather than the CD?

**Daughter:** Yes.

**Researcher:** Why?

**Daughter:** I just trust her.

**Researcher:** So would you say that over time the CD would help families talk more openly about sexual issues?

**Daughter:** Not for me, but I think if other young people are shy and don't talk about it, then it would be really good in helping to discuss things more openly.

**Mother:** Definitely, but this CD needs to not just be advertised in school, but outside school. I have never seen this advertised, but I will be thinking of getting it for my younger daughter.

**Researcher:** Well that has been brilliant. Thank you so much for all your time and for participating in the study. The family were given a brief description regarding the purpose of the research.

## 5<sup>th</sup> Family Interview for Study I

**Participants:** Female parent (aged 40) is a single parent and an alternative education worker (aged 40) with a son (aged 12).

**Consent form signed and retained by the family and researcher.**

**Demographics questionnaire also completed by the family.**

**Researcher:** Thank you. I would also like to ask each of you to fill out the '*Knowledge Quiz*' and put a percentage beside about how sure you are of the answer you have given to being correct.

**Knowledge quiz completed by all and kept by the researcher.**

**Researcher:** Before we start I would like to say '*Thank you*' for taking part in the study and give you a brief description of what the study involves. I am interested in knowing how families communicate sex and relationships within the family context. I would firstly like to ask the young person what sex education they have received.

**Son:** Reproduction and how the body develops, puberty and that's it.

**Researcher:** Okay, and who taught you about that?

**Son:** Science teacher.

**Researcher:** At what age was this taught?

**Son:** Year 8. The age I am now.

**Researcher:** Do you talk to your mum about sex?

**Son:** No.

**Mother:** But would you talk to me about sex?

**Son:** No, not really.

**Mother:** Wouldn't you? Would you not feel comfortable?

**Son:** No, it would just feel weird talking to you about sex.

**Researcher:** So who would you go to talk about sex?

**Son:** Tony.

**Mother:** That's my brother. What about Lewis?

**Son:** Aw yes, I would talk to him about it.

**Mother:** That's his cousin; he is year 14, so he is a couple of years older than him. Very close, lives next door to us. I can understand him talking to his cousin. I would like to think he could talk to me, but I know he does have other family around him to talk to because with him being male. Boys might want to talk to someone about sex who is the same gender.

**Researcher:** So why would you talk to your uncle or cousin about sex, rather than your mum?

**Son:** They know what it is like for a boy and they have already been through it themselves.

**Mother:** So why wouldn't you talk to me? We talk about loads of stuff, why not sex?

**Son:** I would just feel embarrassed.

**Researcher:** So you say you are embarrassed talking to your mum about sex, but why wouldn't it be embarrassing talking to other people?

**Son:** Talking to my mum about it is embarrassing, but I don't really talk to anyone about it at the moment because there is nothing I want to know about.

**Researcher:** Is there about sex and relationship education you would like to know more about?



**Son:** No, I can't think of anything.

**Researcher:** Who do you like to teach you about sexual matters?

**Son:** Probably the teacher at school.

**Researcher:** So why do you prefer the teacher to educate you about sexual matters?

**Son:** Because he isn't just telling me about it, he is teaching lots of us at the same time.

**Researcher:** So you prefer to be taught this way so you are not singled out.

**Son:** Yes and that saves on the embarrassment of not knowing something.

**Researcher:** Do you discuss sexual matters with your friends?

**Son:** No, not really.

**Researcher:** So mum, can I ask you about what sex and relationships education you got when you were at school?

**Mother:** Well to be perfectly honest I can't really remember what I did get taught, but I do know it wasn't much. I remember learning a lot of what I knew from friends and just general progression of growing up. It was life experience and growing up mainly.

**Researcher:** So did you talk to your parents about sex?

**Mother:** Never!

**Researcher:** Why did you not talk to your parents about sex?

**Mother:** Talk to your gran about sex (son and mother laugh). You see we live with my mum, so this is why it might be difficult for him to talk. She is quite old fashioned, never worked, and been a house wife all her life. I mean people say do you watch '*Shameless*'? And I will watch that when mum goes out but, SEX is very taboo, isn't it?

**Son:** Yes we can only watch things like that when she goes out, though.

**Mother:** Yes, we only get to watch things like that when she goes down to the club or to bingo. But we do watch things with sexual content, don't we? (son nods head), but do you get embarrassed when we watch that together?

**Son:** No.

**Mother:** I mean I must admit sometimes if raunchy scenes come on, I do think '*oh, my god, he is watching this*' but if it is put over in a tasteful way, so I don't mind.

**Researcher:** So if scenes come up which you think he needs to know about would you initiate the conversation or would you wait until he asks you?

**Mother:** Well I think the thing is I am a bit of a dictator in that way. I mean we watched '*MI Miami*' the other night and it was about a paedophile and he watched that and it wasn't very nice. I mean don't get me wrong it wasn't explicit or anything like that but I was saying to him why I don't let him go far without others with him. I mean you can see he is only tiny and it wouldn't be hard to snatch him. So I think the television does open the door for conversation, but I think I maybe look at it more from a safety aspect; I don't look at it as though he is dabbling with sexual matters. You know I keep talking about the safety things with him being a little boy, because that's how I see him. I know he might be different with his friends, but I have heard them talking and they're discussing football, sport; not sex or sexual issues.

**Researcher:** Yes. You said before about the fact that you didn't get taught much about sex education, but who taught you what you learnt?

**Mother:** The school.

**Researcher:** At what age was sex education taught, and what aspects were discussed?

**Mother:** I think possibly years 8 or 9, but the message was you just do not have sex. It wasn't sex education like it is today.

**Researcher:** So when you were younger do you remember ever thinking you would like to know more about any sexual issue?

**Mother:** Possibly because I was one of five there was very little time spent on you as an individual, but I suppose if I did want to find out something I would go to my older brother, but yes I think I would have liked to have been a lot more informed about the body and the feelings that come with growing up. I think I tended to try and listen in on people's conversations about sexual matters and therefore I was only getting to know little bits rather than getting to know all that was needed to be taught.

**Researcher:** What age would you say you actually knew all you needed to know about sexual issues?

**Mother:** I would say about 17 or perhaps even 18 years of age.

**Researcher:** So apart from your brother, how did you educate yourself about sexual matters?

**Mother:** I wouldn't go and get a book because that would be too obvious to others, but I would flick through a magazine or something like that.

**Researcher:** So what do you think of the SRE that is taught today, compared to when you were younger?

**Mother:** I don't really know what is taught today, but with being a teacher at a local school, I did sit in on a sex education lesson and it was the funniest lesson I have ever been in because I think the kids were too young. They were only 11 and all they did was laugh and giggle, they didn't learn anything. I don't know if that lesson was the norm of how sex education is taught but if that is sex education then it maybe needs to be taught differently if the kids are to learn anything.

**Researcher:** So do you think that the SRE, which is taught today, is better than in your day?

**Mother:** Yes, I do think kids learn a lot more than we did, but I think it needs to be boys and girls taught separately, and they should teach it in smaller groups so young people take the right information away, and so they can ask questions more and not feel embarrassed.

**Researcher:** So were you embarrassed to talk about sex when you were younger?

**Mother:** Yes, totally.

**Researcher:** Why was that do you think?

**Mother:** I think it was our up-bringing. Even though I have three sisters and a brother, we would never talk to each other about sex, except I may have asked my older brother general questions about sex, but we wouldn't sit down and learn from each other.

**Researcher:** Why?

**Mother:** Big Catholic up-bringing. The messages that we got taught was that sex was taboo and it wasn't very nice. You never did it before you were married, not that it didn't go on, and it was just something you never discussed. It was almost like you needed to find out about sex, but that was only when you were married. It had nothing to do with feelings or emotions and things like that. Even though I had a strict up-bring regarding sex, I do believe that it gave you morals and standards. I do think sex is too promoted today, it is everywhere you look. It is almost like sex is too ready available. It is like a package, it is almost like it is marketed now. Where before it wasn't and I think that was good because when I was 12, I would be playing with my toys where I know some 12

year old girls who play netball at the club I run and you know they are experimenting, but I think oh my god, their bodies are still developing. They are not ready to have sex.

**Researcher:** So at what age do you want your son to know about sexual matters?

**Mother:** I think the school do need to be touching on things about the body and how it is going to change, and things about peer pressure, but I don't think they need to be knowing about it until the age of 13 and that's when it should be reinforced, when they are experiencing a lot of the changes from children to adults. Teaching it now at the age of 12 doesn't mean anything to him.

**Researcher:** So when he gets to the age of 13 will you be telling him the facts of life?

**Mother:** I will start tapping into it, but at his age we are still talking about how to keep yourself safe. You know not going with strangers and I always know where he is. You know he doesn't go down the town by himself, because I think he is too young.

**Researcher:** So you have not told your son about sexual matters then?

**Mother:** No, I think he is far too young.

**Researcher:** Where do you think your son will learn most about sexual matters?

**Mother:** Well when our friend asked me if I would be part of this study, I was thinking of how I approach him about what he has been taught at school. I knew he was doing reproduction, but I didn't know what else he had been taught. So I suppose school will teach him some things, but when I see it as appropriate, say if he has an interest in girls, then I will be telling him things, but I think as time goes on I will pick up on what he probably wants to know more about and I will tell him. I don't want him to have the taboo views on sex like I did. I want him to know a lot more at an earlier age than I found out, but I just want to give him that information at a time that's right. He is quite immature and is still doing the things of a boy, not a man. Like he said before he does get embarrassed talking about sex and I didn't want to question him about what he has been taught at school, encase that embarrassed him more, and prevented us from talking about it. I wanted to see how this went first and then take the steps that are best for him.

**Researcher:** With you living with your mum, and appreciating her views on sexual matters, when do you and your son talk to each other about things associated with sex?

**Mother:** We talk in the car on the way to football. We might talk about the girls at his school and how old they are developing and what they may feel about things.

**Son:** Things that are on the news.

**Mother:** Yes, we will talk about things on the news, but nothing too heavy when talking about sex, but we do talk about things especially when it is in the soaps and things like that.

**Researcher:** So the media have a big input into the conversation about sex?

**Mother:** Yes, and it is a good way of bringing the topic up. Sometimes we also have his friend in the car when we go to football, so they sometime talk amongst themselves about what they have seen on the television.

**Researcher:** So do you talk openly about sexual matters?

**Mother:** I suppose we do really, but we just don't discuss the act and I don't push the religious base of sex onto him, but I try and give him the beliefs and morals behind SRE.

**Researcher:** So do you think the way you discuss SRE in the family is the norm?

**Mother:** I think the way families discuss SRE is very different. I don't know if we are the norm or not because I have never sat him down and said '*Right lets talk about the birds and the bees*', because I don't agree with that. I would like it to be very much on his

terms and at the moment he is enjoying just being a boy, doing boy things. I mean we do talk about the body and how it changing, but I don't want to bombard him with information that I don't think he is at a level to understand. I know I might sound like I control what he learns but it isn't like that. With me being a single parent and their being no contact from the father, we are very close, and he does get my undivided attention and I think that allows us to talk so much about different things, which is very different from how I was brought up. I am quite liberal in my approach about lots of things like drugs, sex and other controversial issues, but I think we do it in a nice way because I make sure that the way it was for me is not going to be the same for my son.

**Researcher:** What forms of the media would you say your son uses to inform himself of sexual issues?

**Mother:** Possibly the computer, but we are not on the Internet, but my sister is who lives next door, so I know he goes and spends time with his older cousin, and they do use the computer together. He may also pick things up from the television, but he doesn't read magazines. The only magazines I have known him ask for is football magazines.

**Researcher:** What forms of the media would you say you use to inform yourself?

**Son:** We have DVDs at school and they show you how the body is changing and what things are going to happen to you. Just things like that really.

**Researcher:** Do you prefer to use computer to educate yourself about sexual matters:

**Son:** Yes, it is better than using books.

**Researcher:** What impact do you think the media have over the SRE that they learn?

**Mother:** I think they promote it too much, because if my son wasn't into sport like he is and he was quite promiscuous it's all there for him with the lead ons. I mean I am quite lucky in that my son is still interested in cartoons and football, but it must be hard for parents who have kids who are easy lead, and who give into peer pressure.

**Researcher:** So the do you think the media is a good thing to help young people understand sexual issues?

**Son:** When I watch television and things like that I don't see the sexual side, I just watch and don't learn anything from it. It is entertaining and enjoyable to watch, but it is not really educational.

**Researcher:** What would you like to see as the ideal SRE to teach your son?

**Mother:** I think it would be better if SRE was taught to small single sex group discussions, whereby they can ask questions without feeling embarrassed and without feeling intimidated to know it all. This doesn't just have to happen in a school setting, it could be at the youth club or somewhere like that where it is less formal.

**Researcher:** How would you like SRE to be taught?

**Son:** With DVDs and doing posters so you can see the stuff in front of you rather than just using books within the school setting.

**Researcher:** Thank you. Would you both like to explore the sections that you would like to on the CD now? (Mother and son nod). Even if you explore a few now I can leave the CD with you and then ask you more questions next week, which would be great. Mother and son sit down to watch the CD. The mother **controls** the computer and starts to look at the different sections. They only watched the relationship section because time was limited for them. After the mother and son explored the multimedia program the researcher asks if they would complete a post-test knowledge quiz. Afterwards the family were asked the following questions:

**Researcher:** So can I just ask a few questions about what your initial thoughts of the CD were? What did you think of the Sense CD initially?

**Mother:** I thought it was good from the bit that I have seen.

**Son:** The buzz words were good and I liked the way it looks and the clear description of how to use the DVD.

**Mother:** Yes the buzz words were good because they probably know the slang terms but not the proper words and the meaning behind them.

**Researcher:** So what aspects of the CD did you like the most?

**Son:** I don't know really.

**Mother:** Well I think it would be good in most settings, where young people can sit around in groups and discuss the different things that they are learning from the CD. It would just be good if young people could just sit and play with something like this rather than being taught in a formal setting. All the information is there for them and they learn at their own pace.

**Researcher:** So what age group would you say the CD would be good for?

**Son:** I don't really know, but it looks good.

**Mother:** I would say about 14 years old.

**Researcher:** Were there any aspects of the CD that you clicked onto and thought you would like to look at it when you were alone?

**Mother:** No, not really I think it is just based on the child really.

**Researcher:** So are there any parts of the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Mother:** Not quite sure until I watch more.

**Researcher:** So would you prefer to talk to your mum about sexual issues, rather than the CD?

**Son:** Prefer the CD.

**Researcher:** Why?

**Son:** Because it wouldn't be embarrassing.

**Researcher:** So would you say that over time the CD would help families talk more openly about sexual issues?

**Mother:** Yes, they probably would go through it but just at the right time for the child.

**Researcher:** Well that has been brilliant, but do you mind if I can come back next week and ask you further questions about the CD and give clarity for anything that we have discussed this week?

**Mother and son:** No that's fine.

**The researcher returns a week later and asks the following questions to the parent as her son is not home from school yet.**

**Researcher:** At present your son is being taught about reproduction at school, but has the school been in touch to discuss what the content is going to be?

**Mother:** No, nothing like that.

**Researcher:** So did they ask you permission before offering sex education to your son?

**Mother:** No.

**Researcher:** Were you happy with the way you were taught about sexual matters?

**Mother:** Not really, it was very vague.

**Researcher:** You said that you did not receive much SRE when you were growing-up, but after watching the Sense CD, are there any aspects of SRE that you feel you would lack the knowledge in when educating your son about sexual matters?

**Mother:** Yes, but I think that is only because of the job that I do. I don't think it is to do with what I have been taught over the years. I think it is only because I talk to young people about these things on a daily basis that I know about the different forms of contraception and the STIs.

**Researcher:** You said last week about not watching certain television programmes when your mum is in the house. So with living in the same house as your mum would you say she still has a big influence on you regarding talking about sexual matters with your son?

**Mother:** Possibly, but I also think it can help it in the fact that last night I went out and there was a condom on the drive. I picked it up; it was un-used I have to say and looked through the window and said to my son is this yours? Well he was rolling around in the chair laughing hysterically and then he just turned and pointed to his nana and said no the condom belongs to nana. Well we were all laughing by this stage, so that helps as well. I do know that he knows things that I have not told him, so I know he is getting the information from somewhere.

**Researcher:** I wonder where he has found out what a condom is because last week he gave the impression that he did not know what a condom was.

**Mother:** I know.

**Researcher:** So did your son watch the Sense CD?

**Mother:** Yes, we watched it together. I must admit he seemed disinterested. I am not saying he didn't find it useful, but he didn't explore it as much as I hoped he would. In a year from now though I think he would find it useful but he is still too much a boy in his thinking, rather than being a young man if you know what I mean.

**Researcher:** Right, do you think it is important for your son to learn about sex, regardless of coming from a Catholic family?

**Mother:** Yes, I think he needs to be educated and I want him to have better sex education offered to him than I had. I want him to be able to make choices, but I don't want the sex education that he receives to be promoted as though he should have sex because he is a certain age or he should be doing the other, or whatever. I want him to grow up knowing about things, but at his level. I don't want things shoved at him when he doesn't want to know about it. I mean we went over the CD, but I let him click onto the sections he wanted to look at, you know such as relationships, body parts. He didn't think of going onto the virtual clinic because he just isn't at that level of wanting to know about where to get condoms from, but we still had a laugh last night but it was more in a joking rather than serious way, because he does find it funny with the level he is at.

**Researcher:** You said last week that you never talked to you parents about sex and you seemed a bit shocked when your son said he wouldn't talk to you about sex because he would get embarrassed, but why do you want your son to talk to you about sex, especially when you were brought up not being told anything about sex from you parents?

**Mother:** Because I have said this to my son, there is nobody in this world that loves him like I do and I have his very best interests at heart and he knows that. I will and do give him information on sex but I am not going to embarrass him and push him into talking or doing something he doesn't want to do. I want to protect him and keep him safe and when the topic comes up about sex I do think he will talk to me and I will talk to him. I think also I tell my son lots of things that he may not regard as educating him and I will be telling him things sometimes without him even asking, but I just want him to be a boy for a long as he wants to be one. I mean he is only 12, so I don't think he does need to be

knowing about contraception and things like that, but in 6 months he might want to and I will talk to him about it, but when he is emotionally ready.

**Researcher:** What makes you want to teach your son about sex when you were not taught like that yourself?

**Mother:** Like I have said really I just want the best for him. He is going to have better than me and he is going to have the best. I could eat him I love him that much and he is going to have better than me.

**Researcher:** You said last week about how SRE was taught at a local non-catholic school, but how is SRE is taught to Catholic pupils?

**Mother:** I think it is pretty much the same. But I would have thought that they have a strict curriculum they have to work by regardless of it being in a Catholic school.

**Researcher:** Are there any aspects concerning sexual matters that you would not discuss with your son?

**Mother:** No, I would discuss anything that he wants to talk about. I don't want any barriers between me and my son.

**Son is now present and the follow-up sexual knowledge questionnaire was completed by mother and son and then the following questions were asked.**

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD initially?

**Mother:** I thought the content was really good but I am not totally computer literate, so it was basically my son who selected the different sections.

**Researcher:** So what did you think (son)?

**Son:** I thought it was good and it was set out well.

**Researcher:** So what aspects of the CD did you like the most?

**Mother:** The communication part was good and the fly was a good feature.

**Son:** I liked the quiz even though I did not know all the answers, but I did like the fly as well.

**Researcher:** So what age group would you say the CD would be good for?

**Mother:** Age 12 upwards.

**Researcher:** What about you (son)?

**Son:** Anywhere from 11 upwards would be good.

**Researcher:** Were there any aspects of the CD that you clicked onto and thought you would like to look at it when you were alone?

**Mother:** There was a few that we just skimmed over which I didn't think were appropriate such as the virtual clinic, contraception and things like that, but like I say he clicked onto the sections himself and I could see which ones he wasn't interested in and that was the ones we skipped over.

**Researcher:** So are there any parts of the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Mother:** Yes, such as contraception, the sexual act. We have talked about the fact that there are STIs out there but not in great detail about each of them.

**Researcher:** So would you prefer to talk to your mum about sexual issues, rather than the CD?

**Son:** It depends what things we were on about. There are some things that I would go to the CD for and there are some things I would talk to my mum about, probably do both.

**Researcher:** So would you say that over time the CD would help families talk more openly about sexual issues?

**Mother:** Definitely, and I think that it is an excellent resource for young people, it is just a shame many people don't know it exists.

**Researcher:** Do you see your Uncle Tony as a fatherly figure and someone you strive to be like?

**Son:** Yes, he is brill.

**Researcher:** A final question I would like to ask you (the son) is would you have been as open, or more open if your mother had not been present in the interview?

**Son:** I don't know.

**Researcher:** Okay, would you have been more open if it was you and your cousin, or you and Uncle Tony?

**Son:** More open (son tries to leave the room).

**Researcher:** Thank you.

**Mother:** Would you?

**Son:** Maybe.

**Mother and son laugh.**

Both were thanked for their time and were then de-briefed about the study.



## 6<sup>th</sup> Family Interview for Study I

**Participants:** Female parent (37) separated and works as a home-moving advisor and has 3 daughters; one aged 8, one (13) and the other (16). The daughters who are 13 (daughter 1) and 16 (daughter 2) participated in the interview.

**Consent form signed and retained by the family and researcher.**

**Demographics questionnaire also completed by the family.**

**Researcher:** Thank you. I would also like to ask each of you to fill out the '*Knowledge Quiz*' and put a percentage beside about how sure you are of the answer you have given to being correct.

**Knowledge quiz completed by all and kept by the researcher.**

**Researcher:** Before we start I would like to say '*Thank you*' for taking part in the study and give you a brief description of what the study involves. I am interested in knowing how families communicate sex and relationships within the family context. I would firstly like to ask to ask the young person what sex education they have received.

**Daughter 2:** I have learnt most of my sex education at school, probably.

**Researcher:** What sorts of things have you been told about?

**Daughter 2:** Periods, contraception, STIs and things like that.

**Researcher:** Did they tell you where you could go for advice and things like that?

**Daughter 2:** They gave us websites and telephone numbers of where to get extra help if needed, and they gave you the address of clinics.

**Researcher:** Brilliant and what about you (daughter one) what sex education have you received?

**Daughter 1:** The same really.

**Researcher:** So what age were you when were taught the sex education you have received at school?

**Daughter 2:** I was 14 or 15.

**Daughter 1:** I was 13.

**Researcher:** So who mainly taught you the sex education you have received?

**Daughter 2:** A lady came from out of school to give us the talk on periods but I don't know where she was from. The rest has been given by the school nurse.

**Researcher:** So when you have been taught sex education at school, have you come home and talked to you parents about it?

**Mother:** Sometimes you have talked to me haven't you?

**Daughter 1:** I haven't.

**Mother:** No, you haven't because you are quite shy, but your older sister and I have talked about things even when you have been there. You just won't have noticed. I mean both of you have brought leaflets home and that has generated conversations on sex.

**Daughter 2:** Yes and those packs that we got free from the period lady.

**Daughter 1:** Oh, yes we did.

**Researcher:** So would you say you do talk to your mum about topics associated with SRE?

**Daughter 2:** Yes, I would come home and talk to my mum about things that I don't understand or even just talk about the things I have been told about at school.

**Researcher:** So would you say you talk quite openly within the family about SRE topics?

**Daughter 1:** I think we do.

**Daughter 2:** Yes, I would say we are quite open.

**Researcher:** So would you say as sisters you talk about things associated with SRE topics?

**Daughters 1 and 2:** Yes.

**Researcher:** What sorts of things would you say you talk about?

**Daughter 2:** When I can be bothered talking to her (joke they both laugh because they keep falling out) we will talk about periods and things.

**Researcher:** Who initiates the discussions on SRE?

**Mother:** If I think she is at that age or she might be thinking of doing this now such as when they have boyfriends I will ask them and make sure they know about being careful and they don't have to do it and things like that.

**Daughter 2:** Sometimes I will just come home and blurt it all out.

**Mother:** Yes you do and that's when we will talk about it, so I think we are quite open about talking about sexual matters and things that they are going through with regards to pressure, not just from their friends, but from boys as well.

**Daughter 2:** Yes, because we are all girls in the house, there are no lads so I think that helps as well.

**Researcher:** So would you say you could talk to your dad about sexual matters?

**Daughter 1:** No, never.

**Daughter 2:** No, because the only thing he does is warn you about lads and that; he doesn't understand what it is like for us girls.

**Daughter 1:** Mothers boyfriend is even worse.

**Daughter 2:** He has two girl kids as well so he goes on at us as well.

**Researcher:** So what sorts of things will he tell you about?

**Daughter 2:** Keep away from lads.

**Daughter 1:** Yes, and he embarrasses you in front of them.

**Researcher:** Is it embarrassing for you both to talk about sex?

**Daughter 1:** Yes, I do because I just don't like talking about it, it is personal.

**Daughter 2:** Yes, I sometimes get embarrassed talking to my mum about sex.

**Mother:** Well you shouldn't.

**They all laugh.**

**Mother:** I think the thing is I would keep asking them questions based on what they are telling me because I am dead nosy.

**Daughter 2:** You keep asking us about lads, and that's really embarrassing.

**Daughter 1:** Yes, and that can be quite personal.

**Researcher:** After discussions, what aspects of SRE did you still want to know more about?

**Daughter 1:** I think they should cover more about STIs and things like that.

**Researcher:** Who would you like to teach you about sexual matters?

**Daughter 1:** The school.

**Daughter 2:** Yes, but also the Internet, mum or even outside visitors that come into school to discuss different things such as periods and things like that.

**Researcher:** Why, what is the main reason for this?

**Daughter 1:** I just prefer to know the facts and I don't like discussing things to do with sex.

**Mother:** But do you think that is because at your age you are not going out with a boyfriend?

**Daughter 1:** Maybe.

**Researcher:** What about you (Daughter 2)?

**Daughter 2:** Well I don't think I get embarrassed when my friends and I use the Internet sites, because we are all learning together and I can talk to my mum about things, but I would hate for SRE to be taught by a teacher who is going to see you everyday. That is why it was good when the lady came in from outside school to talk about periods.

**Researcher:** What sorts of sexual matters do you discuss with your friends?

**Daughter 1:** I don't discuss anything with my friends.

**Daughter 2:** I discuss lots of the things with my friends that we have been taught about at school.

**Researcher:** Are these friends of the same or opposite sex?

**Daughter 2:** Same sex friends.

**Researcher:** So would you say you talk more to your friends about sexual matters than you mum?

**Daughter 2:** Yes, I would say I do.

**Researcher:** What makes you want to talk your friends about sexual matters?

**Daughter 2:** I think it is because I spend more time with my friends than I do with my mum, and also because we are all experiencing the same things with being the same age.

**Researcher:** What aspects of SRE do you learn more about when talking to you friends?

**Daughter 2:** I wouldn't say I learn from them in the same way as I learn at school, but you get an idea of what it is like for them and then you feel safe because a lot of the feelings I might be having are not just happening to me. Friends tend to be more reassuring than anything else.

**Researcher:** So can I just clarify what we have discussed up until now you say that you mainly talk to your mum and close friends about sexual matters and not your father because he doesn't understand what it is like with him not being a girl.

**Family agree, and giggle.**

**Researcher:** So mum, what sex education did you receive when you were at school?

**Mother:** None.

**Researcher:** So you can't remember being taught any?

**Mother:** No, not at all.

**Researcher:** So who would you say taught you about SRE?

**Mother:** Probably, just of my friends.

**Researcher:** Did you talk to your mum and dad about SRE topics?

**Mother:** No.

**Researcher:** So you are able to talk about SRE topics with your daughters more than you could with your parents?

**Mother:** Yes, but I think it was harder for my parents because my mum died when I was 16 and I wouldn't be able to talk to my dad.

**Researcher:** Oh, I am sorry.

**Mother:** No, its alright you were not to know but I think because of the way it was then I just talked to my friends more and that is how I learnt the most. I think also because this was the way it was for me; I remember it being difficult to talk about SRE in those days

and I suppose that's why I try and encourage them to talk to me, because I don't want them to have the worries or lack of information I did.

**Researcher:** So why would you say you feel comfortable talking to each other about sexual matters, apart from the fact that you are all girls living together?

**Daughter 2:** I do trust my mum when we talk about sex, but I am not sure I would tell her too much about the things that are personal to me. It is like you (Daughter 1) were saying before there are some things about sex that are embarrassing and that you just want to keep to yourself.

**Researcher:** At what age did you want to find out more about topics associated with SRE?

**Mother:** I don't know really. I just suppose I tried to pick up as much as possible when people were talking about it, but I think I would have started to talk to my friends about the age of 13 when I started my period.

**Researcher:** What do you think of the SRE taught in your day compared to how young people are taught today?

**Mother:** You don't really find out that much about what they get taught at school really. Only what they (the daughters) tell you. I think schools should communicate with parents more so we can talk to our children about sex when we know they are teaching it at school. I think they are a lot more informed these days. There is a lot more awareness of SRE topics, which we did not get.

**Researcher:** Do you as a parent think you have the SRE knowledge to teach your children about all aspects of SRE?

**Mother:** I think so, but if I needed to know something I would go on the Internet so I could discuss it openly with my girls.

**Researcher:** You said before that you feel as a family you talk openly about sexual matters, but would you say your family is the norm when discussing SRE?

**Daughter 2:** I would say we talk a bit more openly about SRE than some of my other friends and their family.

**Mother:** I would say we are quite open when talking about sexual matters, but we are sometimes restricted on what we discuss with me also having only an eight year old daughter. There is no way we could talk about some things with her being around so I think sometimes the moment has passed if they mention something and I can't elaborate on it because of my 8 year old daughter and her friends being in the house.

**Researcher:** But, at what age would you say you talked to your daughters about sexual matters?

**Mother:** From about 12 upwards I would say, maybe even 11 years old.

**Researcher:** Who would you say initiated the conversations regarding sexual matters?

**Mother:** I would say mainly me.

**Researcher:** What sorts of things did you discuss with your daughters?

**Mother:** I think the main thing is about keeping yourself safe, but we would talk about periods and the different things that are going to happen to the body. As they got a bit older I would talk about sex and peer pressure.

**Researcher:** Are there any topics associated with SRE that you have not discussed with your daughters?

**Mother:** I can't think of anything.

**Researcher:** Where do you think your daughters will learn about sexual matters if you do not teach them?

**Mother:** Probably the Internet, but I would like to think they can come to me if they need to know something.

**Researcher:** How and what circumstances do you talk about sex with your children?

**Mother:** When they bring it up or if I think they may need to know something I will tell them, but we just generally chat and then sexual issues may be brought into the conversation.

**Researcher:** Would you say the media have an impact on what young people learn regarding the SRE that they learn?

**Mother:** Yes, definitely. You sometimes can't get away from it so I think it would be hard not to learn from the different media sources.

**Daughter 2:** Yes, probably because a lot of the programmes that we watch on TV have sex in them or information relating to sex and the Internet as well with all the teen sites you can go on.

**Researcher:** So would you say you use computers to educate yourself about sexual matters?

**Daughter 2:** Yes with my friends I do, but I wouldn't go on it by myself.

**Researcher:** So are there any forms of the media that you would prefer for your daughters to learn from?

**Mother:** Not these two, but I think the television can sometimes show too much for my younger daughter. Even the soaps I just think some things are inappropriate for her at the age of 8. It is not that I don't want her to know about things but she doesn't have the necessary knowledge to put some of the information into context. I mean for example at the moment they are showing two you girls in bed together after kissing and being naked. Now she doesn't even view men and women doing that so I think it maybe a bit confusing trying to help her understand without offering too much information that I don't think she could process and put into context.

**Researcher:** So do you think the media can be a good thing or a bad thing when teaching young people about sexual matters?

**Mother:** I think it can be a good thing for young people to learn about sex, but I think they need to be a bit more careful what they put on television at 7:30pm when young children are not in bed.

**Researcher:** So what would you say is the ideal SRE for your children?

**Mother:** I think it is really good people going into school with expert knowledge to teach young people and I think they need to be taught as a class.

**Researcher:** So do you think religion has an impact on the way young people are taught SRE?

**Mother:** I don't think so. I think regardless of religion young people learn things at the time that is right for them.

**Researcher:** Brilliant. Well thank you for your comments, but may I now ask you to explore the Sense CD?

The mother and her daughters sat together and went through the following sections:-

- ❖ Sex and sexual fantasies
- ❖ Relationship
- ❖ Virtual clinic.

After exploring the Sense CD for about 20 minutes the researcher asked the mother and daughters to complete the '*Knowledge quiz*' again, and then asked the following questions.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD initially?

**Daughter 2:** It looks really good.

**Daughter 1:** It was good.

**Mother:** I thought it was good and very informative.

**Researcher:** So what aspects of the CD did you like the most?

**Daughter 2:** There were lots of sections to click on to that looked really good.

**Daughter 1:** I like the characters and the layout.

**Mother:** I thought it was good in the facts that it gave. I wish something like that was around in my day.

**Researcher:** So what age group would you say the CD would be good for?

**Daughter 2:** Probably year 11.

**Daughter 1:** I think from the age of 13.

**Mother:** Well I think some of the sections could be good for my younger daughter as it is just giving facts from the bit that I saw on the body. That is fine for her age group, but it will be interesting to see what the quiz is all about?

**Researcher:** Were there any aspects of the CD that you clicked onto and thought you would like to look at it when you were alone?

**Daughter 2:** No not really.

**Daughter 1:** Maybe the relationships section.

**Daughter 2:** Yes, I would as well actually.

**Researcher:** So are there any parts of the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Mother:** I couldn't say without going through it when she (Daughter 1) has more time.

**Researcher:** So would you prefer to talk to your mum about sexual issues, rather than the CD?

**Daughter 2:** Probably both.

**Daughter 1:** I think I would.

**Researcher:** Why?

**Daughter 1:** Because I could just go through at my own pace and think about things for myself.

**Researcher:** So would you say that over time the CD would help families talk more openly about sexual issues?

**Daughter 2:** Probably yes because at each section you would talk about in more depth with each other.

**Mother:** I think it would be useful because they do talk to me, more the older one (Daughter 2), but I would hope it would help my younger daughter (Daughter 1) talk to me more about sexual matters as well.

**Researcher:** Well that has been brilliant, but do you mind if I can come back next week and ask you further questions about the CD and give clarity for anything that we have discussed this week?

**Mother and daughter:** No that's fine.

**A week later the researcher revisits the family in their home and asks them to complete the follow-up sexual knowledge questionnaire before asking the following questions:**

**Researcher:** If a CD was around in your day like the Sense CD do you think it would have helped you with not getting any sex education at school?

**Mother:** Definitely. This gave the facts as well as examples of how to manage things that you may be experiencing, but there was nothing like this in my day nor were there the networks where you could phone for help and advice.

**Researcher:** What do you think of the Sense CD now you have had chance to go through it?

**Daughter 1:** I thought it was really good.

**Daughter 2:** Yes so do I. Today I went through some more of the sections that we did not get chance to go on when we all watched it together.

**Mother:** Yes, it was just excellent. I think it is what young people need to know. It would also be good for schools and youth clubs to have.

**Researcher:** So what aspects of the CD do you like the most?

**Mother:** I just liked it all, it was really good.

**Daughter 2:** I liked the virtual clinic because it gave you an idea of the sorts of questions they would ask and that you should not be embarrassed going to a clinic.

**Daughter 1:** I liked the true and false but it would have been better if they gave you the answers if you got a question wrong.

**Researcher:** So what age group would you say the CD would be good for?

**Daughter 1:** 13 upwards really.

**Daughter 2:** No younger for those who go through puberty early.

**Mother:** I think parts of it would be good for people younger, but it would need to be supervised by the parent.

**Researcher:** Were there any aspects of the CD that you clicked onto and thought you would like to look at it when you were alone?

**Daughters 2:** No.

**Daughter 1:** No. I initially thought the relationships section but it is not as personal as I thought it was going to be.

**Mother:** No, not really.

**Researcher:** So are there any parts of the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Mother:** Just the boys parts really. With us all being females you tend to focus more on topics meant for girls.

**Daughter 1:** Yes.

**Researcher:** So would you prefer to talk to your mum about sexual issues, rather than use the CD?

**Daughter 1:** Talk to mum sometimes. The CD is good to go through though because it gives you an idea of what you don't know.

**Daughter 2:** Yes, I think I would prefer to talk to mum, but like you say the CD is really good if you wanted to find something out.

**Researcher:** So would you say that over time the CD would help families talk more openly about sexual issues?

**Daughter 2:** Yes especially for young people who can't or who are not able to talk to their parents for some reason.

**Mother:** Yes, I think it would.

**Researcher:** So can I ask one last question ... it just relates to whether you (the daughters) would have answered the questions differently if your mum had not been present?

**Daughter 2:** I don't know really.

**Daughter 1:** I might have said more now that I know you, but I am not sure.

**Mother:** I think you maybe would have. I think even though we talk about sexual matters, young people have a different way of talking about sex, so I think you would have.

**Researcher:** Well that has been brilliant. I would like to thank you so much for all your time and for participating in the study. The family were then given a brief description as to the purpose of the research.



## 7<sup>th</sup> Family Interview for Study I

**Participants:** Female parent (37 years) and son (aged 12).

**Consent form signed and retained by the family and researcher.**

**Researcher:** Thank you. I would also like to ask each of you to fill out the '*Knowledge Quiz*' and put a percentage beside about how sure you are of the answer you have given to being correct.

**Knowledge quiz completed by all and kept by the researcher.**

**Researcher:** Before we start I would like to say '*Thank you*' for taking part in the study and give you a brief description of what the study involves. I am interested in knowing how families communicate sex and relationships within the family context. Is that okay with you both?

**Mother:** Yes, fine.

**Son:** Yes.

**Researcher:** So can I ask you (son) what sex education you have been taught at school?

**Son:** About puberty and periods mainly.

**Researcher:** Okay. When giving this information did they give you further information on where to go if you needed more information?

**Son:** No.

**Researcher:** So who has taught you the most about SRE?

**Son:** Mr Mason, our science teacher.

**Researcher:** So who do you prefer to talk to about things associated with sex?

**Son:** My parents.

**Researcher:** Why is that?

**Son:** Because when I tell my mum things I know my mum will keep it a secret. If I need to know something that is private I know I can trust her as well not to say anything.

**Researcher:** So you would tell your mum because you can trust her?

**Son:** Yes.

**Researcher:** So at what age has SRE been taught to you?

**Son:** At about 10.

**Researcher:** Do you ever feel embarrassed when talking about sexual matters?

**Son:** No, not if I knew the person I was talking to.

**Researcher:** So when you have been taught aspects of SRE have there been times when you have still wanted to know more about a particular topic or issue?

**Son:** Yes, I would like to know more but I don't know what I want to know more about. I like Science at school and they talk about all of the facts but they don't tell you how to do it or problems associated with certain sexual behaviours.

**Researcher:** So do you discuss any sexual matters with your friends?

**Son:** No. Are you surprised?

**Mother:** No, not really. I just thought you would, I know I did.

**Son:** Dirty girl!!!

**All laugh.**

**Mother:** No I said we talked about things as girls, I am not saying we did it.

**Researcher:** So can I ask (the mum) what sex education was taught to you by your parents?

**Mother:** My mum was very open when talking about sex, and she did this from an early age. I was the youngest of six so my oldest sister was thirteen years older than me so I heard a lot more than maybe other kids when I was younger.

**Researcher:** What age would you say you were when starting to learn about sexual matters?

**Mother:** I probably became more aware about eight, but I had heard things before that age. At school though we were not given any sexual information until I was about 14 years old.

**Mother:** The only thing I got at school was in home economics and that was about periods, which was separated from the boys, so it wasn't mixed and after that it would have been in biology, but it was never a sex education lesson as the information that was given was very brief and as I remember not very useful. There was no emotional or puberty aspects brought into it. At home my mother and sisters would mention periods and the changes that were going to happen as I approached puberty. There was also advice given on how to cope in different situations which was really helpful. My mum made me focus more on the feelings and emotional side associated with sex, but if she didn't tell me something I could always go and ask and she would be very open with me about what I needed to know.

**Researcher:** So even after the information you got given at school and the things your mum told you were there still things you wanted to know more about?

**Mother:** At the time probably not because I was part of a big family base so I was learning in an easy environment, however looked back we were not taught anything about feelings, emotional or skills needed to become a confident adult with the sex education knowledge given at school. What I am trying to say is there was no reassurance given at school or sometimes at home about what was normal and because of that I think it was a scary stage of life.

**Researcher:** So if you were taught something about sexual matters that you didn't quite understand or whereby you wanted to know more, would you go and find out the information for yourself?

**Mother:** The only thing I remember is at the boys club where there were leaflets on '*sexually transmitted diseases*' as they were called at the time and we all pounced on them to try and find out more than what we thought we knew. But apart from that no and because you were not aware of it you didn't ask, you just learnt a lot from your friends and looked back the information that we were given on sex was not always accurate and it wasn't given in a way that we could have benefited the most from learning about it.

**Researcher:** So would you say you learnt most SRE through listening in on other people's conversations when they talked about sex?

**Mother:** Totally, that was how I found out what I needed to know about sexual matters or things associated with sex.

**Researcher:** At what age would you say you were when you felt you had adequate knowledge of SRE?

**Mother:** Even though as you are growing up you tend to think you know it all, I just kept learning more and more, but if I am honest I think looked back I had sufficient knowledge after I left school, definitely not when I was at school.

**Researcher:** So what do you think of the SRE that was taught to you compared to today's teaching?

**Mother:** I think it has improved, but I don't think it is sufficient and I don't think they stagger it enough and place it in context of what they think they need to know more about. It needs to constantly be reinforced and tailored to the needs of young people. They should be furnished with the knowledge rather than dabbling in things and consequently making mistakes.

**Researcher:** When you talked about sex when you were younger, would you say you were embarrassed?

**Mother:** At home no, because we did talk about it quite openly, but at school it was very taboo within the Catholic school ethos, so as a result I feel we did not get given the information from school that we needed.

**Researcher:** Do you as a parent feel that you have the up-to-date knowledge to teach your son about any sexual matters that arise?

**Mother:** I don't know if I have the most up-to-date knowledge, but I think I have a good grounding on sex education and I would go on the Internet to find out accurate information if I had to.

**Researcher:** So can I ask you (son) which parent you talk to mainly about sexual matters:

**Son:** My mum because I spend more time with my mum.

**Researcher:** Why would you say you talk to your mum the most rather than your dad?

**Son:** I can trust my mum and I know she will talk to me about things, but my dad would just take it all the wrong way.

**Researcher:** So do you think more sex education is given to female children rather than male children?

**Mother:** It was when I was at school simply because we got the periods talk and boys were not made aware of what happens to girls. But what is it like for you (son)?

**Son:** We do it all together so we get the same?

**Researcher:** So mum what do you think the reason for this is?

**Mother:** At the time I think it was down to small-mindedness and that with it only applying to girls, boys did not need to know.

**Researcher:** So at what age would you want your son to know about sexual matters?

**Mother:** I think they should be taught about puberty at primary school, especially before they go up to secondary school whereby they are starting to experiencing changes. I think also that they should be taught and made aware of the changes they both males and females experience and not separated like it was when I was younger.

**Researcher:** Are you aware of the SRE that the school teaches your son?

**Mother:** I was asked if I minded him watching a video, but the school has not told me what they will be teaching my son. I do have privet to this information but this is through my job and parents are not told what the school is going to be teaching their children about SRE.

**Researcher:** Who would you say initiates the conversation regarding sexual matters?

**Mother:** I think a lot of the things we talk about is in a friendly banter type way and we do talk openly, but there has been things we have needed to talk about and I think if I didn't make the first move to talk about it, then he would mention it and visa-versa.

**Researcher:** What topics would you say you talked about sexual matters, and at what age were these mentioned?

**Mother:** Well he (the son) is quite bright and although he did not talk about sex in relation to humans he was interested in Science and learnt about cells and sperm cells came into it and also he was quite interested in animals from an early age ... so although sex was discussed loosely in relation to humans but mainly brought about through talking about developments in plants and animals and how they reproduce probably from about the age of 5 or 6 years old. But about sexual matters with him he probably had a knowledge base by the age of 7 or 8 because he is quite bright and he understands the information that you give and that he asks for.

**Researcher:** Are there any topics relation to sex that you would not discuss with your son?

**Mother:** I don't think so. We were fobbed off when we were younger, but you can't do that these days and I don't want him operating under false assumption, because that is not fair.

**Researcher:** So can I ask you (son) you said before you would maybe talk to you mum before talking to you dad about sexual matters, but why is that?

**Son:** I think it is because I am closer to my mum and I trust her a lot more, but I also know if I asked my dad a question he would try and answer it, I do know that, but I just feel happier talking to my mum about sex and lots of other things as well.

**Researcher:** So where do you think he (son) will learn the most about sexual matters?

**Mother:** I think he already has the basic knowledge and I think he has got that of his questioning nature, but I think on the emotional level I think it is going to be trial and error with learning from his peers, but I think he had any questions about sexual matters then I think he will just ask it.

**Researcher:** Are there any restrictions on discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Mother:** The only restriction that I think may be a concern is if other people are here in the house, but I know we spend a lot of time together and I think if he has a question he will ask it and if I want to discuss something with him then I will too, so I don't perceive any restrictions, but if there were any, there are lots of times when it is just me and him and then we would talk about anything that came up or that needs discussing.

**Researcher:** How do you think other families communicate SRE, compared to yours?

**Mother:** I think we talk quite openly about sexual matters and I think this has happened from an early age, but I think my family although they are Catholic are an exception rather than the rule and that has continued into our adulthood and I think we have carried this on with our children.

**Researcher:** What main forms of the media do you use to educate yourself about aspects of SRE?

**Son:** I don't think I learn, well I don't know about learning, but I find out things out such as slang terms and things like that, but I don't watch anything that teaches you about sex.

**Mother:** I am just thinking (son) you have learnt things about homosexuality and contraception from the television when we have watched it because I remember us discussing it at the time.

**Son:** Oh, yes. That's what I mean though you find out about things but it is not like formal learning manner.

**Researcher:** So do you prefer to use the media to learn about different aspects of SRE?

**Son:** I prefer to learn it from my mum and from lessons at school?

**Researcher:** So do you think the media is a good thing or a bad thing with regards to learning about SRE?

**Son:** A good thing in that it can generate conversation, and I suppose you do learn more, but I wouldn't want to watch a porn film or anything like that though.

**Mother:** I think that sometimes it lays it out to be far too stereotypical and I think that they do not show the consequences of being in a sexual relationship in that they sometimes glamorise it. I don't mind sexual things being on the tele but I think they need to show the whole picture and not just leave it very much one- sided.

**Researcher:** You mentioned religion before, but do you mind if I ask some further questions in relation to SRE?

**Mother:** No, go for it.

**Researcher:** Although you were brought up in a Catholic family, would you say you are a practising Catholic even though I have identified some of the views you have as not being part of the Catholic ethos?

**Mother:** I am a Catholic, but I do not go to church like you should. I do believe in God and I did choose for my son to go to a Catholic school but there are issues that concern me about the Catholic side of it. It has moved on a bit and I think the Head Teachers have a lot to do with how they are taught. Even though his school is very religious and they are quite precise in that *"they let children share the act, but not the consequences"*. It does not talk about contraception and where to access it, which I find a small-minded view so I still do have concerns how it implicates and impact of their sexual health.

**Researcher:** So even knowing how they teach SRE and the concerns you have how would you say you give your son the SRE knowledge that the school is not providing?

**Mother:** I think that with the way I have been brought up with regards to the openness in discussing SRE, I am trying to replicate the same with my own son, but with also knowing what the school teaches I try and ensure that he gets the information that is needed and wanted, regardless of my personal beliefs.

**Researcher:** So do you think that the parent's religion impacts on the level of SRE they give their children?

**Mother:** I do think religion impacts on the level of information they want their children to know.

**Researcher:** So does your son follow the Catholic religion?

**Mother:** I have never forced my religion onto my son, and I don't say he should go to church because it is not always a fun place, but I want him to grow up with his personal belief system that he can choose or not choose to follow. Religion is something I was brought up with, but I will not make my child go down that route unless he chooses to himself.

**Researcher:** So do you think that the religion has a big impact on the SRE that you are taught at school?

**Son:** Yes, I do in that God talks about adultery and sex before marriage as one of the biggest sins and there are a lot of strong Catholic believers in our school so they know what they have to teach you but they keep it at a small level. I know that this happens in my school, but I have a different view on things like contraception and sex and that has come from my mum, who even though maybe Catholic we both know I need to be knowing this information, regardless of what my school teachers think. I am me, and not

them, so I will just ask my mum if I need to find out more information, and that's okay isn't it mum?

**Mother:** Laughs and looks with pride. You know you can always come to me and I think one of the reasons for this apart from the fact that I am a brill mum (joke and laughs) is that I will always give you the correct information and we will always talk about things, not just to do with sex, but anything because I like to think that is just the way we are.

**Son:** Yes, I know. Can I go on the trampoline yet?

**Mother:** No, don't be rude we have a bit more to do here first. You cheeky lad!

**Researcher:** Well no that has been brilliant, but do you mind if I leave you to explore the Sense CD?

The mother comes and sits beside her son on the sofa with the laptop. Mother and son listen to the introduction and highlight the characters to see who fancies who, and what each of them likes.

**Mother:** So which one do you want to look at first?

**Son:** True and false.

**Mother:** Do you want to go straight to true or false?

**Son:** Well no, we can start from the beginning if you want.

**Mother:** No, it is entirely up to you.

**Son:** No, let's do it from the start.

**Mother:** Which shall I press?

**Son:** Do it in order.

The mother did as instructed and went to section:-

❖ Sexuality and sexual feelings.

**Mother:** Do you want boy or girl?

**Son:** Boy (They went through this section together and then the phone rang. Whilst mother answered the phone the son went onto the female; Reena. Mother returned and said...).

**Mother:** Oh we are onto the girl (deliberately). Why did you choose that (laughing)?

**Son:** Well you are always telling me to see it from a female's point, so I am.

**Mother:** You are right, however I can't wait to do the sexual fantasies section. We will have some fun with that later.

The mother and son watched part of the CD, but had to close due to prior arrangements they had made. They completed the quiz and answered the following questions:

**Researcher:** So can I ask what you thought of the CD overall?

**Son:** It was alright, yes.

**Mother:** It seems to be fun as well doesn't it?

**Son:** Yes.

**Mother:** What age would you say it is for? Would you say it was for yours and your mate's age?

**Son:** Yes (rushing to go on trampoline still because his friends are due to be there any minute).

**Researcher:** What did you think were the best sections on the CD?

**Son:** Don't know until I see more.

**Researcher:** Did you see any sections that you thought you would not watch as a family?

**Mother:** No, but I can't wait until we get chance to go through the sexual fantasies section; his life won't be worth living (joking).

**Researcher:** The family had to bring the meeting to an end early due to other arrangements of the family.

**Family agrees for the follow-up meeting to take place a week later, whereby they completed the follow-up sexual knowledge questionnaire before answering the following questions:**

**Researcher:** So can I ask (son) why you think it is that your mum talks to you more about sexual matters than your father?

**Son:** Don't really know why it is my mum, except that I feel close to her and I trust her.

**Researcher:** When you were describing the SRE that is taught to you at school can I ask what size of group you prefer to be taught in and do you prefer for these groups to be mixed or of single sex?

**Son:** There are about 30 in the class, but I don't have a preference of what size group it is just as I don't mind that it is mixed. It is better that way so you get to know what it is like for both boys and girls.

**Researcher:** So can I ask you (mum) why you think it is that you're son talks to you more about sexual matters, rather than his father?

**Mother:** I think part of it is because he lives with me and we spend a lot more time together. So sometimes I have a dual role, but I don't know how it would be if his dad and I were not divorced whether it would be any different.

**Researcher:** So can I ask why you think it is that mothers talk to their children more about sexual matters, rather than your father?

**Mother:** I think it is more to do with the nurturing role takes within a family unit, so that when you are bringing the children up you develop a closer relationship and it is usually the mum they want when they are ill and it is the same sort of concept when there is something they are unsure about or a little bit frightened about it is the mum that would be reassuring and the nurturing one in that situation.

**Researcher:** Looked back do you think you knew enough sex education at your different stages of development to prepare you for adult life?

**Mother:** At the time I thought I knew it all, but now I think I had my peers' concept of what it was and not the facts. We knew there was a line of truth in what we knew but things got added on to that which were not necessarily true when I think back and obviously from my family I learnt a little bit more but I don't think I had the facts from my peers, no.

**Researcher:** If you look back to the SRE that was taught when you were younger, how do you think it could have been better in providing you with the information needed to help you through adolescence?

**Mother:** I think it was because it wasn't openly discussed at school and we did not get anywhere near enough sex education at school, so it was almost like sex and matters relating to sex did not exist and any structure to how it was taught would have been an improvement.

**Researcher:** The first question I would like to ask is relating to the Sense CD that we went through last week when you said you really liked it, but having looked at it again this week what did you now think of the Sense CD overall?

**Mother:** He went back to it and spent quite a lot of time on it didn't you?

**Son:** Yes, I thought it was good.

**Researcher:** Why do you think it was good?

**Son:** I don't know, I suppose it was a fun way to learn and it gave me chance to think about things a lot more based on what I already know.

**Mother:** I just thought the animation side of it was good and I think it was aimed at his age as well as it being good in that it was a fun way to learn as it wasn't like he was being talked to or told information; he was able to find things out for himself, so it takes away the formal education slant, even though there are things on that CD that he would not get taught at school.

**Researcher:** So do you think the CD would be useful in preventing some of the embarrassment young people experience when being taught sex education at school and at home?

**Son:** Yes. Some people in my class get embarrassed when we do sex education classes, especially if they get asked questions, but if young people could use the CD to learn about sexual matters themselves it would be better because they would learn more and not get embarrassed?

**Mother:** Good answer! I also think that the CD would put some humour into teaching sex education. I know aspects of sex education are not funny, but some things are and it would be better if they learnt about things in a fun and less formal manner and environment. I think also bringing humour into it would help generate conversations between young people and teacher/parents and the young person as this would create a less pressured environment.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Mother:** I thought the sign-posting was a good feature.

**Son:** I just thought it was all fun and educational.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Son:** There wasn't any.

**Mother:** No, I just thought it was an excellent tool to teach sex and matters associated with sex education and it was really easy to use.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Mother:** I think theoretically you could go right the way back to 6 to 7 years of age for some things and then add to this each year so they are regularly going over the same things with an extension each time and build it up like that. Then it would not be all or nothing like it was for me and on occasions how it is for him (her son).

**Researcher:** Was there any aspect of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Mother:** No, we briefly went through some sections together, and then he took it and had a good look through it by himself. It did generate some conversation, but also laughter, which I think was helpful.

**Son:** No, I don't think there were.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Mother:** Well that was what generated one of the conversations.

**Son:** Yes, CONTRACEPTION, mother!

**They both laugh.**

**Mother:** I thought we had but then when I think about it afterwards we have mainly only discussed the condom and not the pill.

**Researcher:** So why do you think you have not discussed contraception in the detail that you have discussed other sexual topics?



**Mother:** I don't know really, I think it is just because I hadn't thought the sexual act was close yet, so I hadn't thought to discuss it with him. I mean we have discussed condoms, but not other contraception in relation to girls as well. I hadn't thought he was at that stage; well I was hoping not (laughs). I mean I didn't expect him to become a priest but I was hoping he would delay sex for a few more years at least, but no seriously I am pleased we have discussed contraception from both sexes, but that just goes to show how useful the CD has been to us. It may not have reduced any barriers for discussing sex, but it has generated conversations so I can educate him and give him all the information that he wants and possibly needs in future, especially in relation to contraception.

**They both laugh, again.**

**Researcher:** Would you prefer to talk to your parents rather than find out about SRE aspects by using the CD?

**Son:** The CD to learn about the facts, but then my mum to clarify and add more to the information I have learnt.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Son:** Well I think so, especially with me now knowing about contraception, which my mum hadn't discussed. Bad mother!

**Researcher:** As a parent do you feel you could talk openly with your child about all aspects that arose within the CD or are there things on the CD you were not aware of as a parent?

**Mother:** I think we have hit on most of it, but I just think it is a tool that should be used. We are lucky in that we have a close and open relationship; people can be close but not so open so I think the CD would help overcome a lot of hurdles.

**Researcher:** Great. May I ask one final question? I would just like to ask you (the son) if you would have answered the questions differently if interviewed without your mother present?

**Son:** No, I don't think so. I talk to my mum anyway, so I have nothing to hide.

**Mother:** Aw (mother nudges her son in an affectionate manner).

**Researcher:** Well this has been brilliant and I can't thank you enough for all of your time and openness when talking to me. Debrief of study was given and mother and son were thanked again.

## 8<sup>th</sup> Family Interview for Study One

**Participants:** Female parent (44 years), male parent (47), son (aged 15) and daughter (13).

**Consent form signed and retained by the family and researcher.**

**Researcher:** Thank you. I would also like to ask each of you to fill out the '*Knowledge Quiz*' and put a percentage beside about how sure you are of the answer you have given to being correct.

**Knowledge quiz completed by all and kept by the researcher.**

**Researcher:** Before we start I would like to say '*Thank you*' for taking part in the study and give you all a brief description of what the study involves. I am interested in knowing how families communicate sex and relationships within the family context. Is that okay with you all?

**The family all agree.**

**Researcher:** So can I ask you (the adolescents) what sex education you have been taught at school?

**Daughter:** About puberty and the changes and things like that.

**Son:** Well this person came in and I think she does the injections as well and she did the same, but she talked about contraception and HIV also.

**Researcher:** So have you had the contraception and HIV talk then (the daughter)?

**Daughter:** What does contraception mean?

**Researcher:** Well things to keep yourself safe, like the condom or pill to prevent pregnancy.

**Daughter:** No, I don't think so.

**Researcher:** Okay. When you (the son) were giving this information did they give you further information on where to go if you needed more information?

**Son:** Well not really, but they did give us a leaflet to explain a bit more about what they taught us.

**Researcher:** So at what age was this taught (asked to son)?

**Son:** In year nine (13-14 years old).

**Researcher:** So in what year did you get your sex education (asked to daughter)?

**Daughter:** In year eight (12-13 year old).

**Researcher:** So who has taught you the most about SRE?

**Son:** Well we were taught about the biology side at school, but I also talk to my mum and dad sometimes.

**Daughter:** Yes, I talk to my mum sometimes as well.

**Researcher:** So who do you prefer to talk to about things associated with sex?

**Daughter:** My mum.

**Son:** My parents.

**Researcher:** So why would you prefer to talk to your mum (asked to daughter)?

**Daughter:** Because I feel more comfortable talking to a girl, but I don't feel comfortable talking to boys about it.

**Researcher:** Why do you feel more comfortable talking to girls?

**Daughter:** Because they understand what I am talking about.

**Researcher:** You said that you talk to both parents about sexual matters, but are there things you would talk to your dad about, but not your mum?

**Son:** Yes, sometimes because dad will understand a lot more about what I am experiencing with him already having been through it himself.

**Researcher:** So is there any other reason why you talk to your mum or mum/dad about sexual matters?

**Son:** Well for me it is because I can trust them and you talk to them on more of a personal level because they are your parents, but you couldn't talk to your friends in the same way.

**Researcher:** What about you (asked to daughter)?

**Daughter:** You can trust your parents, but you can't trust your friends because they will talk about you behind your back; mum wouldn't do that to me.

**Researcher:** So am I right in thinking that you talk to your parents because you can trust them and that they will have a better understanding of what you are going through and how you are feeling?

**Both son and daughter agree.**

**Researcher:** So who would you say starts the conversation when talking about sexual matters?

**Son & Daughter:** Both really.

**Researcher:** Do you ever feel embarrassed when talking about sexual matters?

**Son:** No, not really.

**Daughter:** No, well sometimes; I mean I find it hard to talk about things because I sometimes don't know how to explain myself with the proper words.

**Researcher:** Okay. So when you have been taught aspects of SRE have there been times when you have still wanted to know more about a particular topic or issue?

**Son:** Yes, but that is when you learn at school and then come home and talk to mum and dad.

**Daughter:** Yes. The school don't always explain it well so I sometimes don't understand and that is when I talk to my mum.

**Researcher:** So who would you prefer to talk to the most when learning about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** Well I don't know because the Science teacher will probably know more, but like you need to know the other side which you can learn from your mum and dad.

**Son:** Same really.

**Researcher:** So do you discuss any sexual matters with your friends?

**Son:** Sometimes (laughs).

**Researcher:** Okay and what sorts of things do you talk about?

**Son:** Em, all sorts of things really.

**Researcher:** Girls???

**Son:** Yes (laughs) and about how we are changing as we are growing up, but also looked for some sort of confirmation that you are not alone and that you are not the only one experiencing these changes.

**Researcher:** Great, so are these the same sex friends or are they females?

**Son:** Probably the same sex.

**Researcher:** So do you learn much from your friends when talking about sex?

**Son:** No. It is just funning around really.

**Researcher:** Yes.

**Daughter:** Yes, and they do jokes in our class when talking about sex.

**Researcher:** So does that help you learn about sex and other sexual matters?

**Daughter:** No, it is just daft talk really?

**Researcher:** So can I ask (parents) what sex education was taught to you when growing up by either school or by your parents?

**Father:** All we got was a film. We got told to go into a hall and then we were shown a film about sex.

**Mother:** But your mum used to talk to you about sex.

**Father:** Yes, our mum talked to me about sex. I think this started about when I was 12 or 13, but she was always quite open and honest with us about lots of things, really.

**Researcher:** So you would say you were brought up in an environment where everyone was open about sexual matters?

**Father:** Yes, and no, really. My dad never talked to me or my brothers about anything to do with sex.

**Researcher:** Why do you think your mum would have talked to you more than your dad?

**Father:** Because things were happening to me so I would ask her.

**Researcher:** So why would you go and talk to your mum about sexual matters rather than your father?

**Father:** I was a lot closer to my mum.

**Researcher:** So what sex education did you receive (asked to mum)?

**Mother:** None. I can not recall ever talking about sex or anything to do with sex to my parents or even being taught about it at school. But your mum (pointing to husband) wasn't well and I think before she passed on she was tying up the loose ends in that she told you everything you needed to know because she knew she wasn't going to be around to answer questions later on when you were growing up. I think that was good at the age he was at and I encourage all my kids to talk to me about anything they want to know and I won't be shocked but I didn't learn about sex properly and I think it was wrong the way sex was taught to me, in my day. I just picked it up as I went along, hoping to get the information before I needed it the most.

**Researcher:** So what sexual matters did you want to know about when you were growing up?

**Mother:** Loads, everything especially as I was starting to change physically and emotionally, but I just got on with it. I did not know what I needed to know, but I just knew I needed information to help me deal with the changes that were happening to me.

**Researcher:** So did your brothers and sisters tell you anything about sex or other sexual matters?

**Mother:** No, I was in the middle. I had two older and two younger, but they never told me about it. It wasn't just me it was a '*taboo*' thing in the whole house and even now it still stays with you and that's why I want these to be educated properly. I mean when I had a baby I remember thing '*my mum can not have gone through this, or she would have told me*'. So I was still learning as I went along, even now.

**Researcher:** So would you say you learnt about aspects of SRE through listening in on other people's conversations when they talked about sex?

**Mother:** Yes, probably, but I don't think I had the basic understanding and that's probably why some of the things people would say I still wouldn't understand.

**Researcher:** At what age would you say you were when you felt you had adequate knowledge of SRE?

**Mother:** I still don't think I know it all even now because like I say I don't think I have the knowledge of all the facts. I know about the relationships side and the emotional side, but they probably know more of the correct information, but I think between me and my husband we had all the information combined, but I don't have it on my own. I wouldn't feel confident telling these about the sex education; I could probably do with a lesson in it myself.

**Researcher:** So what do you think of the SRE that was taught to you compared to today's teaching?

**Mother:** It is definitely better, but I think today everything is so much more advanced and better all in the best interests of young people. I mean she (the daughter) is on a SEN (special educational needs) register but she knows a lot more than I did when I was twelve, so there are things like that now which has improved the standards of education and I think that is good. I mean I think this is excellent the way we are all sat around now talking about sex very openly and I think for someone like yourself to come into this house and get my kids, especially her (the daughter) to talk about sex in front of her dad and brother is brilliant. This is the way it should be discussed. I mean your mum (talking about her husband) was marvellous with you when she knew she was going to pass on in that she sat you at the end of her bed and gave you all the information you could possibly know or that she knew to tell you because she wasn't going to be around to educate you in the future. She was a brilliant mum, and that is the way I want to be with my kids, but I just don't have the facts to tell them, so I try and offer the other side in regards to relationships and how we can find things out together so they don't go through what I went through.

**Researcher:** Aw that's lovely. May I also ask you (the father) about what you think of the SRE that was taught to you compared to today's teaching?

**Father:** Well, it's so much better. I mean there was practically none when I was a kid, except the film, but that wasn't brilliant.

**Mother:** Being part of this makes us seem like we are really old when talking about the olden days and all the changes that have happened.

**Researcher:** When you talked about sex when you were younger, would you say you were embarrassed?

**Mother:** I would have said in our house it was which is why it never got discussed. I think also my parents were more embarrassed to discuss sex more than we were which is why they never, not once did they bring it up and I think that is because they didn't have the knowledge either, so they couldn't tell us..

**Father:** I think my dad might have been embarrassed, but my mum definitely wasn't. She was very open with me and I thank her for that.

**Researcher:** Do you as a parent feel that you have the up-to-date knowledge to teach your son about any sexual matters that arise?

**Father:** I think I would be able to, yes.

**Researcher:** And what about you (mother)?

**Mother:** I don't know if I would be able to answer all of their questions, but I would be honest with them if I did not know, but I would then either go to the library or on the Internet to find out the information they needed to know more about.

**Researcher:** So can I ask you (son) which parent you talk to mainly about sexual matters:

**Son:** Both, equally I would say.

**Mother:** I think the thing is I am regularly saying to them is there anything you want to tell me or do you want me to tell you anything, so I am very keen to be behind the emotional stuff, but my husband is more educated about sex and how to explain it than I am.

**Researcher:** Why would you say you talk to your parents the most about sex?

**Daughter:** Because you can ask them questions and they are not going to laugh at you and make you feel stupid.

**Son:** Parents are more aware of your feelings as well in that if they think you don't know something they will tell you without making it a big issue. You can also trust them.

**Researcher:** So do you think more sex education is given to female children rather than male children?

**Son:** I think they might in that the girls got an extra session before we all got the standard sex education as a class. I know it was probably to do with periods, but lads need to know about what girls are going through and vice-versa.

**Daughter:** I think just the same.

**Researcher:** So what age do you think your children need to know about sexual matters?

**Mother:** Well our other daughter is ten and I keep talking to her about things associated with changes and periods and I think it is important that they are equipped with the correct information and not be fobbed off.

**Researcher:** Are you aware of the SRE that has or is being given to your children?

**Mother:** If they are going to show them something then the school ask if we are happy for that but with regards to what is actually being taught then I don't know, but they come home and tell us anyway, but the school don't tell us.

**Researcher:** So can I ask who normally initiates the conversation on sexual matters within the family?

**Mother:** I think she comes in and asks questions, but then I will ask her questions to make sure she has the correct knowledge on something, but with him he is that bit older and has the knowledge so I concentrate more on the emotional side with him.

**Father:** I am probably accused of being nosey in that instead of putting him in a position that he is not comfortable, but I will ask about his friends and what they are up to and then we lead it onto him and I suppose then we both ask each other questions, so I suppose the answer would be *'we all do'*.

**Researcher:** So what age would you say you started talking to these about sexual matters and what was discussed?

**Mother and father:** About 12.

**Mother:** I think I started talking to her gently at about 9 or ten years old about puberty changes, just trying to prepare her for what was going to happen and that it is quite normal.

**Researcher:** Are there any topics relating to sexual matters that you would not discuss with your children?

**Mother:** No, I don't think there are any. If they wanted me to I would discuss anything with them. I would not deprive them of any information and I don't think we do as parents, do we?

**Father:** No, we talk about the sexual matters they want to discuss and much more, I think.

**Researcher:** So where do you think your children will learn the most about sexual matters?

**Father:** I think what they are learning it from school or from what they ask us.

**Researcher:** Are there any restrictions on discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Father:** Yes, I mean you couldn't talk about sexual matters with the youngest around.

**Mother:** Yes but as well this house is very busy in that there is always lots going on, so people are coming in all the time, not just children it can be adults picking up one of the kids for football or something like that, but if I was talking to her about something I would stop talking if someone came into the room because what we are talking about is personal, but we will talk about it later. I also go to bed early and when I tuck her in I will ask if there is anything she wants to talk about, so we would come back to what we were talking about and discuss it in more detail then.

**Researcher:** How do you think other families communicate SRE, compared to yours?

**Mother:** I think we talk quite openly about sexual matters but I don't know how we are compared to other families, but we want to educate our kids about sex and other topics. I mean we don't just sit down and say '*we are going to talk about sex and whatever else*', but we bring it into everyday life, especially at the ages these two are at, they have to know things.

**Researcher:** What main forms of the media do you use to educate yourself about aspects of SRE?

**Son:** Sometimes television programmes can be useful, especially Eastenders or Coronation Street, so I think I might learn things from watching TV.

**Daughter:** Me too. It gives you an idea of what to do in certain situations. I also use computers, like CD's at school. Some are really good.

**Researcher:** So do you think the media is a good thing or a bad thing with regards to learning about SRE?

**Mother:** Can I just say at the moment I think it is a bad thing, not so much on sexual matters but it is all about how young people, especially your girls are be driven to change how they are to be like the celebrities and big stars. It was in the paper the other day how girls want boob-jobs and surgery done to their faces to make them look different to meet the stereotypes in this day and age. I think that most of this comes from the media and some of the magazines that young people buy.

**Researcher:** I know you were brought up in a Catholic family (mother), but would you say that the parent's religion impacts on the level of SRE they give their children?

**Mother:** I think it is suppose to but I even though I am Catholic and I have my beliefs, they are my beliefs and I don't push them on anybody, especially not my children. I think what I teach my children is the morals and the values needed for adult life and I do believe that children need to be educated and they do need the knowledge, which is far more important than any religion or religious steering.

**Father:** I am just Church of England and when I say just I do mean '*just*' because I didn't choose to be; my parents made that choice and so I will only follow my religion if I want to but I agree with my wife in that when bringing up our children we want them to have the values and morals which are going to steer them as people, not a religion. Kids are not as religious as we used to be when we were younger.

**Mother:** Yes, I agree in that religion is becoming a dying past because kids are not made to be part of one religion or the other, it seems to me these days parents are concentrating

on the negative experiences they had as children and making it different for their own children, which is what I do with mine. I want better for my children and I think that is the same for other parents as well.

**Researcher:** So do you think that the religion has a big impact on the SRE that you are taught at school?

**Son:** Yes in a way, because if you ask a question about something that they don't want to talk about, say contraception ... they just don't give you the honest answer, so I just wouldn't ask anything again, but I would come and talk to my mum and dad about it.

**Father:** Yes, I do and we are aware of what the schools maybe don't want to discuss with our children from a SRE way.

**Mother:** Yes, but that is why we make extra efforts to give them the information that they might not be getting told at school. I say might because I do not know what the content is that they do get taught, apart from what our children tell us. I just know that as parents we have a responsibility to give our children the knowledge they need for becoming adults.

The interview had to come to an end due to one of the other children having a bad fall and needed to be attended to. The family did agree that they would look at the CD for next time when we meet for the follow-up meeting.

**Family agreed for the follow-up meeting to take place a week later.**

The researcher left the Sense CD with questionnaires for the family and a week later the original interview the researcher went back to ask the following questions:

**Researcher:** I know we did not get chance to go through the CD last week but can I ask you what your initial thoughts were of the Sense CD?

**Mother & Father:** Great.

**Daughter:** I thought it was really good because I could relate to it, especially the puberty section.

**Son:** I wasn't sure about it in the beginning because I prefer to learn about things on my own because I can concentrate. It was hard to concentrate with her (sister) yakking on.

**All laugh.**

**Researcher:** So did you complete the 'Quiz' after viewing the CD initially?

**Son:** Yes, but we watched it twice.

**Daughter:** Me and mum also watched it together separately.

Son gave the researcher the quizzes that the family had completed.

**Researcher:** Thank you very much for these, but can I also ask when you watched the CD the second time whether you had your views changed regarding what you thought of the CD?

**Daughter:** The more I watched it the more I liked it and I got more interested as I felt I was learning from watching it, especially when going through it with my mum on our own.

**Mother:** Aw, that's nice, but what things did you think you learnt more about?

**Daughter:** I think it was how the body is made up and the puberty section was really good.

**Son:** Well, I thought the CD was good. Even though at twelve or thirteen you wouldn't maybe understand certain things like the virtual clinic, or get all the answers right in the quiz like a 16 year old might, there are things in the CD that relate to all ages during teen age years.



**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Son:** How it taught you. It didn't just give you the facts it told you the how and why as well, which they don't do at school. They just give you the facts.

**Father:** Yes, I must admit it covers the body parts in far more detail than what I ever got taught at school.

**Daughter:** I liked looking at it with my mum and going through things that were said on the CD. I mean the CD teaches you things and makes people talk together, but it doesn't tell you about things like a teacher would.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Son:** There were none.

**Daughter:** I liked all that I saw too.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Son:** 12 to 16/17 years old.

**Daughter and father agree.**

**Mother:** Yes, but I also think certain sections could be taught at an earlier age, especially for those starting puberty early.

**Researcher:** Was there any aspect of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Mother:** No, I think we have covered most if not all the aspects covered on the CD.

**Son:** Yes with me, but do you talk about the same things with her (the daughter).

**Mother:** Yes, just at the level she understands. You will have a better understanding, but we have talked about things on the CD haven't we?

**Daughter:** Yes, I would say so, except where I could get contraception from and at what age I can get this.

**Mother:** I have told you about those things.

**Daughter:** Yes, but the CD showed the virtual clinic.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Mother:** Well apparently not where to get condoms from.

**Family laugh.**

**Researcher:** Would you prefer to talk to your parents rather than find out about SRE aspects by using the CD?

**Son:** Both.

**Daughter:** Yes it is good to get the facts from the CD but then also ask mum more about things to help me understand.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Mother:** Yes, I think you being here has been really helpful, but I think we will also still be talking about aspects of the CD in the future.

**Father:** Yes, it has been really good being part of this.

**Researcher:** Thank you for having me, it has been lovely to meet you all. But can I also ask that as a parent do you feel you could talk openly with your child about all aspects raised within the CD?

**Mother:** I think so.

**Father:** Yes, I do too.

**Researcher:** You said last week that you have been taught about puberty changes at school, but has this information been adequate or would you still like to be told more?

**Daughter:** No, I think it has been okay, but I do talk to my mum about things which help me understand more.

**Researcher:** You also said last week that you sometimes get embarrassed when talking about sexual matters, but what things do you find it embarrassing to talk about?

**Daughter:** About, em well last month we watched a video on sex and the girl on the video had a big afro hair style, but on this day I had my hair down and they kept laughing at me and relating me to the girl in the film and that was embarrassing, but sometimes I can't say words correctly and they also laugh at me for this.

**Researcher:** So you get embarrassed because it singles you out, rather than being the same as others in your class.

**Mother:** This is where I think the schools need to be a lot more sensitive towards young peoples needs and show material that is appropriate and not aimed at any one child. I am not just saying this because she is my daughter but it would be horrible for this to happen to any child.

**Researcher:** Yes, I totally agree.

**Mother:** SRE also needs to be taught in smaller groups where young people can ask questions if they are unsure about something so they are able to ask without getting embarrassed of what the others are going to say.

**Researcher:** When you were describing the SRE that is taught to you at school can I ask what size of group you prefer to be taught in and do you prefer for these groups to be mixed or of single sex?

**Son:** Not many of us; there would be about fifteen.

**Researcher:** Were you happy with that size group?

**Son:** I was happy with the group size, but I wasn't happy the way boys and girls were separated because when we have single sex classes you don't get to know about what both sexes are experiencing.

**Researcher:** And what about you (daughter)?

**Daughter:** Well probably about 30 of us, but we were not separated, we were all kept together.

**Researcher:** So can I ask why you think it is that your mother talked to you most about sexual matters, rather than your father?

**Father:** That was to do with my family circumstances. My mother was poorly and her husband at the time was not my father. She had only just married this man as her second husband and I didn't have a close relationship with him because he hadn't been married to my mum long before she had died.

**Researcher:** Why do you think fathers do not talk, or not talk as much to their children about sexual matters?

**Father:** Well, I think this is probably quite an individual thing, but our children spend more time with my wife because I am at work when they come home from school and at work when they get up for school, so I often miss both meal times when I suppose most families tend to talk the most. I am here to talk to them on a night time but they are often out by this time either playing sport or being with their friends.

**Mother:** Yes, but I tell you about the conversations I have with them regarding sexual matters.

**Father:** Oh yes I know, but I am not often part of that communication because I am at work full time so it makes it difficult. I know my wife also works hard but she owns her

own busy and is able to make her work schedule fit around the kid's needs. I can't do this, so I think we just work around things together.

**Mother:** Yes, I agree. I mean I think you (her husband) know more about sexual matters than I do so when they ask me something that I may not know we talk and then I will give them the correct information. I think also though it is the fact that I am always the parent that takes them to the dentist, doctor for eye tests and I do think with mothers doing the most for and with their children they form a different sort of relationship. We are always at their '*Beck-and-call*'.

**Researcher:** So are you saying (mother) that with mothers having more of a nurturing role that this influences the amount they talk with their children?

**Mother:** I suppose, yes. I think we all feel closer to people who we know care about us and I think mothers show this in all that they do for their children.

**Researcher:** Great. So looked back do you think you knew enough sex education at your different stages of development to prepare you for adult life?

**Mother:** I definitely didn't.

**Father:** I don't think I did from school, but I think because of the close relationship I had with my mum, I would say she prepared me with the knowledge, morals and value base that is needed, not just in regards to sex education, but everything that says who you are.

**Researcher:** If you look back to the SRE that was taught when you were younger, how do you think it could have been better in providing you with the information needed to help you through adolescence?

**Mother:** Anything would have been an improvement. I think sex is an important aspect of life and I know how important it is now I am an adult, that's why I want my children to have the sex education I didn't have.

**Father:** I am not really sure if it could have, not at home anyway.

**Researcher:** Great. May I ask one final question to you both (son and daughter) would you have answered the questions any differently if you had been interviewed separately from your parents?

**Son:** No, I don't think I would have.

**Daughter:** Maybe, because I am not used to talking in front of my brother and dad about sexual matters. I only talk to my mum because I think she understands more about me and what I am going through.

**Mother:** Yes, I think you (the daughter) would have said more with just all us girls together.

**Daughter:** Yes, just because you would not laugh at me or judge me in a bad way.

**Researcher:** Bless you!

Family were thanked for their time and given a brief description as to the purpose of the study.

## 9<sup>th</sup> Family Interview for Study I

**Participants:** Female parent (40 years), male parent (46), son (aged 13) and absent son (aged 16).

**Consent form signed and retained by the family and researcher.**

**Researcher:** Thank you. I would also like to ask each of you to fill out the '*Knowledge Quiz*' and put a percentage beside about how sure you are of the answer you have given to being correct.

**Knowledge quiz completed by all and kept by the researcher.**

**Researcher:** Before we start I would like to say '*Thank you*' for taking part in the study and give you a brief description of what the study involves. I am interested in knowing how families communicate sex and relationships within the family context. Is that okay with you all?

**The family all agree.**

**Researcher:** What sex and relationship education (SRE) has been taught to you (the son)?

**Son:** Just about reproduction; how the sperm fertilises the egg, periods and basic things about puberty.

**Researcher:** Great and what size of group is SRE taught in and is it mixed or single-sex?

**Son:** It was in a group of about 30 of us; the whole class really (boys and girls).

**Researcher:** Was signposting given to say where you get further information or advice?

**Son:** No, they didn't. We just watched two videos; one of reproduction and one on periods.

**Researcher:** Who has taught the SRE (i.e. mother, father, school etc)?

**Son:** Probably my mum, but I have also talked to my dad a few times.

**Researcher:** Why do you prefer to talk to your mum about sexual matters?

**Son:** She probably knows more about it and I can trust her as well and em...

**Mother:** I think you also know that when you do ask questions I am always going to tell you the truth.

**Son:** Yes, that was also what I was trying to say, but it is also not just to do with being honest it is also that I trust you not to tell anybody else.

**Mother:** Aw, you trust me do you son? (joking)

**Son:** Well I have to really, you are my mum.

**Researcher:** Why do you also prefer to talk to your dad about sexual matters?

**Son:** Pretty much the same reasons for talking to my mum; I can also trust my dad.

**Researcher:** So are there things that you would only talk to your mum about that you wouldn't talk to your dad about, and visa-versa?

**Son:** Well, it is just when I come in from school my mum will ask me what I have been doing in that day and I will say '*Reproduction*' or whatever it was and she just explain it in a lot more detail than the teacher has, so I totally understand what has been told to me.

**Researcher:** Great. You said there about you would go and talk to you mum about things when you come in from school, but is there any other times which you would discuss sexual matters as a family.

**Son:** Well when I come in for my tea and when I come in on a night time after being out with my friends.

**Researcher:** And is your dad at home at those times?

**Son:** Yes, he is probably watching the football on television.

**All laugh!**

**Father:** Well thanks a lot.

**Researcher:** At what age was SRE taught and what topics were discussed?

**Son:** At year 8 (aged 13).

**Researcher:** So were you taught about any sexual matters from home before receiving that sex education at school?

**Son:** Yes. My mum has told me the consequences of having early, unprotected sex, about AIDS and contraception.

**Father:** Yes and that you will get it chopped off because it is against the law to have sex under the age of 16.

**Son:** Yes, I know it is, but they (the parents) also tell me '*Sex doesn't work until the age of 18*'.

**Mother:** Yes, we are still thinking about that one, aren't we?

**Family laugh!**

**Son:** They think I am daft, but that's okay because I tell everyone she is my nana.

**Mother:** Oh yes. He phones me up one day to ask if he can go out. And when I said "yes", he said "*Okay, great, oh and by the way you are a nana*". I nearly died. I know you will probably think we don't take sexual matters seriously, but we do. We just try and bring humour into it because that is the way we are as a family about other things.

**Father:** There is a time to joke and a time to be serious and he knows where the boundaries are and when we are being serious.

**Researcher:** Who initiated the discussion of SRE?

**Son:** Well I suppose I am the one who says what I have been taught, but mum asks me in a general way which leaves it open for me to talk to her about things.

**Mother:** We have this thing on a night time when we all eat together and we go around the table so everybody gets their chance to say what they have done in that day and what has made them laugh? You have to laugh every day because it is the... **MOTHER AND SON SAY AT THE SAME TIME:** '*The Law*'. This is a little thing that we do as a family and I suppose this is where I would say we talk openly about sexual matters in that it opens up the conversation to talk about anything and everything.

**Researcher:** Yes, great. So is it embarrassing to discuss sexual matters? (son)

**Son:** No, it is just like any other topic, but I also know that when you talk about private things within the family they are not going to laugh at you and hurt your feelings, like possibly your mates or a teacher would.

**Researcher:** After discussions, what aspects of SRE did you still want to know more about?

**Son:** Well no, not really because even though teachers do not always explain about things properly, coming home and talking to my mum just makes me understand so much. But she will say, em... say I came home and said I had been taught about puberty today, she would listen to me and then say "*Did they tell you about this, or did they explain how that can happen?*" So I suppose if the teacher didn't tell me, then she would just so I know the facts and all the other stuff that goes with it.

**Researcher:** Who would you like to teach you about sexual matters?

**Son:** I would probably prefer my mum and dad to tell me.

**Researcher:** Why, what is the reason for this?

**Son:** At school it is so serious and sometimes you dare not ask questions, but at home it is much easier and safer to talk about sex and how you are feeling because it is relaxed and not a rushed conversation.

**Mother:** Yes, I must admit we do sit and talk about things for quite a while, especially about feelings. I tell him that it is normal to have feelings, especially being a male. Don't get me wrong he isn't soft, but he has to have feelings to consider other people and what they might be feeling.

**Son:** Yes, mum *'I know it is not all about me'* (joking)

**Mother:** Nudges son and says *'You little punk, don't take the mick out of me; I am your mother'*.

**The whole family laugh!**

**Researcher:** What sorts of sexual matters do you discuss with friends?

**Father:** Bums!

**Son:** Well obviously. We just joke about things of what we see and hear, but it is never serious stuff like I talk to my mum and dad about.

**Mother:** Yes, well there have been times when they have said things ...

**Father:** Yes, like *'If you masturbate, it will drop off'*.

**Mother:** Yes (laughs). But I have always said if you hear something you are not sure about or not sure if something is true; ask me and I will tell you the truth.

**Son:** Yes, I know and that is it. I think I have a pretty good idea about sex and sexual matters from talking to my mum and dad, so they often don't say things that are true because I have already probably talked to my mum and dad about it.

**Father:** Yes, like not so long ago your mates were saying to you about *'cheesy knobs'* in that the cheesy stuff is orange in colour, but the week before we had had a talk about hygiene and I had told him about how to lift the foreskin back to clean his penis properly and to get rid of the creamy stuff, because that can smell of cheese if it is not cleaned regularly and properly. So he knew his mates had it wrong because I talked to him about it and all I can say he was in the shower for quite a while that evening.

**Family laugh.**

**Son:** Cream cheese free though!

**Mother:** Yes, and no hot water left.

**All laugh together (not even the researcher could help but laugh).**

**Researcher:** So if you do talk to your friends are they of the same or opposite sex?

**Son:** Both because I talk to my girlfriend about things, and she talks to me as well.

**Father:** Remember what I have said to you *'Just talk- no action- no babies'*.

**Son:** I know dad. Mum he is off again!

**Mother:** I know son but you know he rarely talks sense, but on this occasion I agree.

**Son:** Okay mum, for you.

**Researcher:** What makes you want to talk to your friends about sexual matters?

**Son:** I don't really talk to them, it is just they bring it up in the conversation so I listen.

**Researcher:** What aspects of SRE do you learn more about when talking to friends?

**Son:** I don't, except the cheese on your knob is orange – NOT!

**Mother and father laugh and mother pats her son's knee in a comforting way and father says *'That's my boy'*.**

**Researcher:** Right lad, it is your turn to have a laugh at your mum and dad now because I have some questions for them.

**Son:** Brill.

**Mother:** Right are you listening (husband)?

**Father:** I am all ears even though you will do most of the talking.

**Mother:** Cheeky!

**Researcher:** What sex and relationship education (SRE) was been taught to you (the parents)?

**Mother:** Well the only thing I can remember being taught was when new were given the period talk in senior school, probably 13 or 14 years of age.

**Researcher:** Did your parents ever talk to you about sexual matters?

**Mother:** No not at all.

**Researcher:** Why do you think they didn't talk to you about sex or sexual matters?

**Mother:** I think possibly to do with the generations in that they just didn't talk about those sorts of things; it just wasn't their way, so you just found out from your friends. These days people are a lot more honest and show their feelings a lot more, so it allows for the topic to be discussed more openly and not treated as a taboo subject as when I was younger.

**Researcher:** Great. So what sex and relationships (SRE) was taught to you? (Father)

**Father:** Very little. Pretty much what she got. I remember getting reproduction in secondary school and learning from a book about the different changes for boys and girls.

**Mother:** I think you might have got more than me because I went to a Catholic school and you didn't. I did get taught about the body in biology though.

**Father:** Well I did but I also remember them going through the changes for male and females during puberty at about the age of 13 or 14 years of age, but I got nothing from the family because they didn't have time. Mind, my parents didn't have much for anything with having 10 kids. (laughs)

**Researcher:** So did you talk to any other family members about sexual matters?

**Father:** Well, I learnt quite a bit from my older sisters. Not that they talked about it in detail but they had boyfriends and you knew what was going on just through the conversations they would have and they would tell me things just at different times. I mean, I think I knew more about periods than any other lad of age; well especially the mood swings anyway.

**Researcher:** You have both said there that your parents didn't discuss sexual matters with you when you were younger, but why do you think that was?

**Mother:** Possibly embarrassment.

**Father:** Yes definitely, but I think there was also that assumption that the school would teach you about it, not just sex, but other topics. In those days parents were not really the educators.

**Mother:** Yes that's true.

**Researcher:** With hindsight, do you think your parents had sufficient knowledge to teach you about sexual matters?

**Father:** No not really, possibly the basics but not about contraception or anything like that.

**Mother:** I don't know if it is just that I was brought up in a religious family but looked back it almost seems sex was a word that was never used, and that the act was never discussed; it is just the way it was.

**Researcher:** Do you feel your family were open about sexual matters when you were younger?

**All laugh!**

**Mother:** I think the thing is that our families were and are still very close in that they are always there for you and would help if you ever asked, but I just wouldn't have felt comfortable asking my parents about sexual matters, and I don't think our parents knew of such things as PMT or masturbation or any of the other topics we discuss in our family.

**Father:** I know if I had asked my dad about sexual matters he would have told me as much as he knew, just as I have with him (son), but my father or even my mother never made the safe and comfortable environment to discuss sexual matters like we do. Plus I wouldn't ask him because I think I knew more than him, so why ask him when he doesn't know much, I would have been educating him and let's face it he needed the education, especially having 10 kids.

**Mother:** I know if sex was discussed in our family it was like a dirty word and anybody that mentioned sex were seen as being inappropriate and you would almost think em... When I think back the best way I can explain how sex was seen was in a pornographic way; dirty, unacceptable and discussion was stopped pretty quick if people did mention anything to do with sex and the subject was changed. I can still remember a day he came in here and the television was on and two people were snogging and he just says '*Piffle*' and turns it over.

**Father:** Yes, I remember that day. He just went around the house saying '*Piffle*' strange old bugger wasn't he?

**Mother:** Well your not quite as strange as your dad, love, but that was just his way, but I couldn't imagine them getting sex education either.

**Father:** No, I suppose they didn't. I mean we joke about my dad saying '*Piffle*', but if we are sat here watching something on television that is of a sexual nature he (son) might say something about him getting taught about it at school and then that opens up the conversation, but when I was younger if something sexual came on the television it was '*Piffle*' and we were sent to bed.

**Mother:** Yes, sent to bed and it was not discussed again.

**Researcher:** So can I just clarify that the only sex education that you were taught was about puberty, including periods and you were given basic biology lessons saying how the body worked. You also said that your parents did not discuss sexual matters, but you learnt from your sisters (father)...

**Mother:** Yes, and I learnt from my friends.

**Researcher:** Did you still want to know more about sexual matters?

**Mother:** Oh yes, I am sure there was things I wanted to know at the time.

**Father:** It was just treated as a joke because they were not educated enough. It was always laughed about and everybody said they knew more than they did. To be part of the in crowd, you had to pretend you knew it all, but just hoped you would pick it up as you went along. I don't think it is much different for some kids of today.

**Researcher:** With hindsight do you think the topics associated with the SRE you were given were younger was accurate and correct?

**Father:** No, I know that what I was told was true.

**Researcher:** How did you find out SRE for yourself?



**Mother:** I would mainly talk to my older sister or friends.

**Father:** Magazines from the top shelf.

**Researcher:** Really.

**Father:** Oh yes everybody did because nobody talked about it so the oldest lad would buy the magazine, tell the woman behind the counter it was for his dad and then we would educate each other on what sex and other sexual matters were all about by discussing its content.

**Mother:** Yes, but dirty mags are not really used these days are they?

**Father:** No, but they were then when we were not given proper sex education.

**Researcher:** Did you learn any SRE from listening to other people conversations?

**Mother and father:** Yes.

**Father:** You almost had to so you got a good understanding of it all.

**Researcher:** What age do you think you were when you felt you had adequate knowledge of SRE topics?

**Mother:** 38 (laughs)

**Son:** Are you trying to say you are 38?

**Father:** We know the truth don't we son?

**Mother:** I think it is on-going these days; you never stop learning.

**Father:** Oh yes, but I think I was in my 30s when I think I had a really good understanding of all sexual matters.

**Researcher:** With hindsight do you think you knew enough sex education at your different developmental stages to prepare you for adult life?

**Mother:** Oh no, definitely not.

**Father:** Well I did, she didn't. (laughs)

**Mother:** Well you are quite a bit older than me dear.

**Father:** Oh, that's nasty, but seriously no, I don't think any of us did.

**Researcher:** If you look back to the SRE that was taught when you were younger, how do you think it could have been improved to provide you with the information you wanted or needed at the time?

**Mother:** I think if they had started it younger, possibly primary school ...

**Father:** Oh no. I disagree that's too young you don't know what your body is for until you get to 12 or 13.

**Mother:** Well that's because you are going from this stage of being wrapped up in cotton wool to going into this big wide-world of adulthood and I think if it was taught last year of primary school; just about puberty aspects, not about full sex or contraception methods, but just a taster instead of lumping it on them in their first year of secondary. I mean was it a shock for you when you were taught it at secondary school? (son)

**Son:** Yes, massive.

**Mother:** I mean when you are 7 or 8 years old 'bum' and 'fart' are the funniest words in the world to say, but I think they go through stages and hitting them with sex education at 13 is very embarrassing for them because they are struggling with the body changing as it is so I think if it was introduced at an earlier age they would be more prepared.

**Father:** I still think primary school is still quite young, lass.

**Mother:** Well it doesn't have to be in depth, but a lot of girls start their period at the age of 11 or 12 and if they haven't be told, how are they expected to know how to deal with

that situation and put it into context in that it is quite a normal aspect of growing up (voice slightly raised, mother is passionate about sex education being introduced earlier).

**Father:** Yes, I can see where you are coming from and kids might not treat it as too much of a joke if it is taught at an earlier age. I give in, you're right as usual. See, I have told you son don't challenge females; do as you are told, like me.

**All laugh.**

**Researcher:** What did you think of the SRE that was taught, compared with today's teaching?

**Father:** I don't know what they get taught. I know I didn't get taught much and you (son) haven't been taught much have you?

**Son:** No, I know as much as I do through talking to you two.

**Mother:** I think it is better now because people are a lot more open and it has become a lot more acceptable than we were younger.

**Father:** The media have a lot more of an impact now as well.

**Mother:** I don't know what your pals are like at talking to their parents about things, but I think these days it is something kids feel a lot more comfortable discussing compared to in our days, when we were younger. But it is every magazine and paper. I do feel the education is better, but like I said before it needs to be touched on before they get to secondary school.

**Father:** That's it. I mean our lads know that they can come to us and talk to us about anything and we have told them that, but we couldn't do that so I suppose it is us educating ourselves.

**Mother:** I think what we have done is ... we have looked at our education and ... I can always remember being at school and people would be saying that they had had sex when they hadn't and its about being part of the crowd and we have always said to him (the son) that a lot of his friends will be saying they have had sex when they haven't.

**Father:** I think that is it; we tell him the truth so that when he goes to school and they are all laughing and joking about things that he knows the true facts and not the myths that kids spread around.

**Researcher:** How was sex discussed and why do you think it was discussed in this way? (i.e. embarrassment?)

**Mother:** Well it goes back to before in that, even though sex was not discussed it was probably more embarrassing for our parents than for us in that even when we were married, in our own home we would not be able to watch a film even with kissing in without dad saying '*Piffle*'.

**Father laughs.**

**Mother:** Well he did and your parents were not much better in that, even though they didn't say anything to show disapproval, they were embarrassed if sexual topics were discussed.

**Researcher:** Do you as a parent feel you have the up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach your child about sexual matters?

**Mother & Father:** Yes.

**Researcher:** Which parent mainly talks to their child/children about sexual matters?

**Father:** Talks to their mum more.

**Son:** My mum.

**Researcher:** Why is it this parent? (I.e. factors)

**Son:** Probably because when I come in she is the first one I see; say she will be cooking tea, plus she asks me about things.

**Father:** Yes, she is a bit more curious than I am, and potentially more nosy, but we won't go there.

**Mother smiles at husband and then frowns to let him know he is being cheeky.**

**Researcher:** Do you think more sex education is given to female children rather than male children?

**Father:** We wouldn't know really with having sons, but I wouldn't have thought so.

**Son:** I think we get the same sex education as them school, but I don't know about at home.

**Researcher:** At what age do you want your children to know about sexual matters?

**Father:** About 11 or 12 when the body start changing.

**Mother:** Yes, but the school should be tapping into it a bit earlier at school, so kids can ask their parents at a time that is right for them.

**Researcher:** Are or have you been aware of the SRE being taught to you're child at school?

**Father:** No.

**Mother:** Not until he comes home and asks questions.

**Researcher:** To gain clarity from a comment you made earlier would you say that you all initiate the conversations regarding sexual matters?

**All agree.**

**Researcher:** What topics do parents discuss with their children, and at what age and is it different for sons and daughters?

**Father:** Not everything.

**Mother:** What do you mean? Like what?

**Father:** Well about oral sex, gay sex things like that they learn as they get older.

**Mother:** Why?

**Father:** Because I don't want to talk about it. That sort of stuff is private and very individual.

**Mother:** Well I would.

**Father:** Yes, I know you would.

**Mother:** I mean we have talked about gays, because we have gay friends and that at the age of seven he didn't understand why two females were having a relationship, so I have explained, no I think we did in that we said although it may not seem right to us because we have male and female relationships, but that everyone is different and they don't go around with a sign saying '*we are gay*' which is why he didn't see them as being anything different as it was right for them.

**Father:** Yes, I suppose we have talked about it but not about how they have sex and the interpersonal stuff; that's what I mean when I say I don't want to talk about it, not what terms mean.

**Researcher:** When and what circumstances are these conversations likely to occur?

**Mother:** Mainly when he comes home from school or from watching the television, but there are no set circumstances.

**Father:** They can talk to us any time, except when the Boro are playing (joking).

**All the family laugh.**

**Researcher:** What topics do parents NOT discuss with their children?

**Mother:** Any topics at any time.

**Researcher:** Where do you think your child will learn about the sexual matters if you don't teach them?

**Mother:** Well, I would like to think from us, but I think he will also learn from his peers and possibly through relationships with females. But I think they learn about things a lot younger than we think. I remember when they were little I got given and '*us born*' book on sex and I used to leave it in the book shelf in their room. Our eldest son didn't ask too many questions but he did probably from as young as primary school. I mean it was very basic but I am sure that has helped towards him asking questions and finding out more to do with sexual matters.

**Researcher:** Are there any restrictions on not discussing sexual matters within the family amongst yourselves?

**Mother:** No, I wouldn't say so.

**Father:** No. What about you son?

**Son:** No, I can't ever remember coming to either of you and not having questions answered or not being able to ask questions.

**Researcher:** Do you feel that your family talk openly about sexual matters within the family?

**Father:** Yes, but I think my brother thinks we are too open, because he doesn't talk to his kids about sex, so he probably thinks we are a bit strange. The sex education is in no way smutty or crude, but it is fact-based with a bit of humour.

**Researcher:** How do you think other families communicate SRE, compared to yours?

**Mother:** Well I think we are very lucky with having our boys as they are very considerate, thoughtful and observant. I mean we went out the other night and he (the son) phones to ask if he can open the Pringles (crisps) as it was the last tube. It is the same with his brother in that working for the probation service we get a lot of physical and sexual abuse cases and I brought this questionnaire home to ask questions about when to have sex; pressure on females and things like that and they answered all the questions correctly. I don't think some parents would possibly want to ask their kids questions like that in fear of the answers, but as a family I think we are very open about all and any topic, not just sex, but I also do not think other families are as open as we are even though I don't know what make me feel we are different. I suppose we are just very fortunate.

**Father:** Yes, I mean we do check them and keep them in line, but in my eyes that's what I think good parents are all about. I suppose when we were deciding to have kids we just wanted better for them than we had had when we were younger without shouting '*Piffle*' every time sex was mentioned. We are quite liberal and close as a family.

**Researcher:** What main forms of the media (computers, magazines etc) do adolescents use to learn about issues regarding SRE?

**Son:** Well, I suppose mainly television, but this is normally just to get an idea of how people manage different situation, not to learn about sex; I learn that from my parents or school.

**Researcher:** What sorts of things do you learn from these sources that you do not get taught about elsewhere? As above

**Researcher:** Do you prefer to use these sources to learn about SRE?

**Son:** No, I prefer to talk to my parents.

**Researcher:** What impact do you think the media (computers, magazines, etc) have on adolescents regarding the SRE that they learn?

**Mother:** Probably a much bigger one than we possible know; you can't help it, sex is everywhere these days.

**Father:** Yes, I can imagine them picking up lots of things. What do you think? (son)

**Son:** I think it is a good way of learning about sexual matters because it helps you remember things that you possibly forget and it reinforces sex education in a nice way all the formal stuff you get taught.

**Researcher:** So do you think the media is a good thing or a bad thing when teaching young people about sexual matters? (parents)

**Mother:** I think it is a good thing in that it can generate conversations about lots of things.

**Father:** Yes, so do I. There have been many conversations arisen in this house as a knock-on effect of something he has seen or read, so yes I think it is a good thing.

**Researcher:** Do you think parent's religion impacts on the SRE they give to their children? (parents)

**Mother:** I think it can if you have very strong parental beliefs and that these get passed onto you child in a strict way, but we haven't done that. I still like the morals and values attached to the Catholic religion, which is why I am a believer but I would not make these be religious if they don't want to be.

**Father:** Yes, but even though you have beliefs that are attached to a religion I would not say you are as religious as some other Catholics who let their religion rule their lives and go to church on a Sunday.

**Mother:** Oh, no we rule our life, not religion.

**Researcher:** So may I ask, without showing any disrespect to you or your religion, why you still sent your children to a Catholic school when you knew they would possibly not discuss certain aspects of sex education, such as contraception, which you believe it is important for your child to know?

**Mother:** Well, when we had to decide where to send our children to school we just felt that they would get a better education in some ways at a Catholic school, but in its areas of weakness we were ready to take on a more exact parenting role to educate our children about sexual matters.

**Father:** But we would probably have done that anyway, regardless of religion because we want the best for our children.

**Researcher:** Do you think the religious beliefs you have been brought up with influences the SRE you receive? (son)

**Son:** At school yes, but not in the way I have been taught at home.

The family watched the CD together and chose to explore the

- ❖ True and false section. The father used the mouse to answer questions. The family all showed agreement before choosing the responses, but if the son did not understand certain words like '*emergency contraception*' the father explained.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Mother:** Very good and easy to use.

**Son:** I didn't understand all of the words.

**Mother:** Yes, but that's why we can go through the CD and talk about it as a family.

**Son:** Okay.

**Father:** We will go through it son when it is not as late. Time is getting on now.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Son:** I think for me it was the way it was all laid out, it looked really smart and something that would appeal to young people. It also gives a lot of valuable information and advice.

**Mother:** Very good response. I was pretty much the same in the way it looks well designed and very easy to use.

**Father:** Well I am going to reserve comment until I have seen more. I like the true and false quiz though. I think this is going to be fun and very educational for him.

The family were unable to answer any further questions until they had watched more sections. The family complete the post sexual knowledge questionnaire.

**Went back one week later and asked the family to complete the follow-up sexual knowledge questionnaire and the following questions were asked:**

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD after exploring more of it?

**Son:** I understand a lot more now, even the long and unusual words in the drop-down menu. The CD has been really good and told you a lot; a lot of things I don't think I would have learnt from school when looked at the factual information.

**Mother:** It was good and has been really useful in explaining some of the things to him.

**Father:** Brilliant. It is a long time in coming; I wish it has been around when I was younger.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Mother:** I thought it was really good when you had a mix of artificial and real characters to discuss the scenarios, but I think it would have been better if it had included some more of these conversation into other aspects of the CD as I think those scenarios would be really helpful for young people to relate to, such as when Reena thought she was pregnant.

**Father:** Well, I think it was good in that it didn't include too much of the biological side which can be boring. It covered a lot more on relationships which I thought was good because you could sit and discuss sex and sexual relationships until the cows come home, but with feelings being a very individual thing it just might help young people when they are thinking of entering into a relationships, sexual or not, to get as much of an idea of the bigger picture as possible.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**All agree on none.**

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Son:** 12 or a bit younger.

**Mother:** Yes, I think it is about that age, but possibly a bit younger

**Father:** Well not too much younger; kids need to be kids and don't need sex education too early on, puberty stuff and that is fine, but not sex and all the rest of it until about 12 years old.

**Researcher:** Was there any aspect of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Father:** No. I thought the part when father was driving and was discussing sex with his son was good; I related to that?

**Son:** Yes, when we were coming back from football that night.

**Mother:** What was that about?

**Father:** Him asking about body piercing and why do people get them on their genitals and nipples.

**Son:** It can help increase the sensation when having sex, just for some people you know.

**Father and son laughed.**

**Mother:** And how would you know?

**Son:** Dad told me.

**Father:** I told you I would answer any questions.

**Mother:** You could have told me.

**Father:** I did, it was months ago.

**The family laugh together.**

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Mother:** I very much doubt it after hearing what these two have discussed.

**Father:** No, I don't think so. He struggled with knowing the correct terms for works but I think you know now don't you son?

**Son:** Yes, I think so.

**Researcher:** Would you prefer to talk to your parents rather than find out about SRE aspects by using the CD?

**Son:** Mainly mum and dad, but I liked it when we went through the CD together because it allowed me to ask questions that I wouldn't have without the prompts on the CD.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Father:** Yes, not so much with families like ours, but definitely in families like my brother's where they don't discuss sexual matters.

**Researcher:** One final question for you (the son) young man ... would you have answered the questions any differently if your parents had not been present?

**Son:** No, I would have told them exactly what we had talked about if they had not been here.

Family were thanked for their time and given a de-brief of the study.

## 10<sup>th</sup> Family Interview for Study I

**Participants:** Female parent (42 years); male parent (45); son 1 (aged 13); son 2 (aged 15); and 2 absent daughters.

**Consent form signed and retained by the family and researcher.**

**Researcher:** Thank you. I would also like to ask each of you to fill out the '*Knowledge Quiz*' and put a percentage beside about how sure you are of the answer you have given to being correct.

**Knowledge quiz completed by all and kept by the researcher.**

**Researcher:** Before we start I would like to say '*Thank you*' for taking part in the study and give you a brief description of what the study involves. I am interested in knowing how families communicate sex and relationships within the family context. Is that okay with you all?

**The family all agree.**

**Researcher:** What sex and relationship education (SRE) has been taught to adolescents?

**Son 2:** A video and a teacher talk when I in year 5 (around 9 or 10 years old).

**Son 1:** I have done about the body when I was around 9 (years) and then I had some sex education last week.

**Researcher:** And what sorts of things did they talk about?

**Son 2:** Puberty, contraception and STIs and stuff like that.

**Son 1:** We got told a little bit about puberty when I was about 8 and then I think I would have been about 11/12 when we got told about sex and how the body develops.

**Researcher:** Great and what size of group was SRE taught in and is it mixed or single-sex?

**Son 2:** About 20 boys in the class.

**Son 1:** Yes, all boys.

**Researcher:** Was signposting given to say where you get further information or advice?

**Son 1:** Yes, they gave us a booklet giving, a list of numbers and different web-sites, but that's was all.

**Researcher:** Great, was any sign-posting given to you? (Son 2)

**Son 2:** No, not by the teachers.

**Researcher:** Who has taught the SRE? (i.e. mother, father, school, etc).

**Son 1 & 2:** Teachers.

**Son 1:** Yes we also had outside agencies come in to give sex education through doing a roadshow.

**Son 2:** Yes, that's what I got as well when I was about 12.

**Researcher:** Who do you prefer to talk to this person about sex?

**Son 1 & 2:** Teachers.

**Researcher:** Why do you prefer to talk to these particular people about sexual matters?

**Son 2:** I would just be embarrassed for my mum and dad to talk to me about it; I don't know why though.

**Son 1:** Yes, at least when the teacher or a person from outside agencies who come into the school to tell you about things; it isn't embarrassing because they don't know you and you won't see them again once they have given you the information.

**Researcher:** So do you talk to your parents about sexual matters?

**Son 1 & 2:** No, definitely not. (Older son looks embarrassed).



**Researcher:** So do you get embarrassed when talking about sexual matters with your parents? (Son 2)

**Son 2:** Yes, it is just not something you talk about with them; I just couldn't do it I don't know why.

**Researcher:** So you would say that you do not openly discuss sexual matters within the family environment?

**Son 2:** No.

**Son 1:** Not really, no, but we could if we wanted to.

**Mother:** We do talk about it even if in a joking way, but we do talk.

**Son 1:** No, we don't.

**Son 2:** Our sisters joke about it more.

**Mother:** Yes, I suppose they break the ice, but we do talk about it. We do!

**Researcher:** At what age was SRE taught and what topics were discussed?

**Son 1:** Aged 9/10. (As above)

**Son 2:** Age 9 and then again at 13 years old. (As above)

**Researcher:** So were you taught about any sexual matters from home before receiving that sex education at school?

**Mother:** We have always left books (age appropriate) around and in their bedrooms, so they could have a look and ask questions and they did but this was when they were much younger, probably at around the age of 5. I know we have talked about puberty and things like that before they were to secondary school, but since then I think the school has given them the information they need and want in an environment they feel most comfortable in.

**Researcher:** Who initiated the discussion of SRE?

**Mother:** Us, I think.

**Researcher:** What topics are embarrassing to talk about? (i.e. relationships)

**Son 1:** All when it comes to talking to parents.

**Researcher:** Why do you get embarrassed talking about these topics?

**Son 1:** I don't know, I just do.

**Researcher:** After discussions, what aspects of SRE did you still want to know more about?

**Son 1:** There wasn't any really.

**Son 2:** I think I know enough for now.

**Researcher:** What sorts of sexual matters do you discuss with friends?

**Son 1:** I don't really talk to my friends about sex, but we do have a joke on about girls, but it is not serious talking like at school.

**Son 2:** I just don't talk to them about sex; not that it is embarrassing, but we just talk about other things.

**Researcher:** So if you do talk to your friends are they of the same or opposite sex?

**Son 1:** Just my mates, not girls.

**Researcher:** What makes you want to talk; to your friends about sexual matters?

**Son 1:** Well I wouldn't say we talk we just have a laugh about lasses.

**Researcher:** What aspects of SRE do you learn more about when talking to friends?

**Son 1:** I don't really learn anything.

**Researcher:** What sex and relationship education (SRE) has been taught to you (the parents)?

**Mother:** I think I would have been about 14 when I got a brief talk on periods and they added how a baby was made, but that was all.

**Father:** I think I was taught sex education at the age of 13, but they only told you the basics.

**Researcher:** Did your parents ever talk to you about sexual matters?

**Father:** Not really, it was rarely talked about, not like today. In this era kids are told so much more than we were taught.

**Mother:** Yes, I mean some of the things they watch on television would just have been turned off when I was younger and sometimes I feel embarrassed when they are watching programmes of a sexual nature, but I think that is because of the way I was brought up. It was a very embarrassing topic and it just wasn't discussed.

**Researcher:** Why do you think they didn't talk to you about sex or sexual matters?

**Mother:** I think they were just embarrassed, my mum talked about what she had to do. It was also the generation that we were in; regardless of religion, people just did not talk about it openly or sometimes not at all.

**Father:** Yes, and I don't suppose they had a great knowledge base of sex education either.

**Researcher:** So did you talk to any other family members about sexual matters?

**Mother:** No, I think I just talked to my friends.

**Father:** Yes, I did. It is far easier talking about sexual matters with your friends who are of the same age. I think that is the way it is today as well; nothing's changed.

**Researcher:** With hindsight do you think your parents had sufficient knowledge to teach you about sexual matters?

**Mother:** No I don't think it was to do with their knowledge; it was just something you didn't discuss in the home. I mean did you?

**Father:** No, but your family were big church-goers so you wouldn't discuss sex with them because they were quite old fashioned as well.

**Mother:** Yes, but I think it is more than that in that they were not allowed to talk about it when they were younger; it just was not the done thing in that era.

**Researcher:** Do you feel your family were open about sexual matters when you were younger?

**Both Parents agree that sexual matters were not discussed openly.**

**Researcher:** What more did you still want to know more about?

**Mother:** At the time I wouldn't have been able to tell you, but looking back it would have been better if we were more informed with facts and like the kids said before to know what it is like for other people, but with sexual matters not being discussed you didn't find out things.

**Father:** I think I just picked things up as I went along, because I didn't know what things I needed to know, so you just try and learn as much as possible when you can.

**Researcher:** With hindsight do you think the topics associated with the SRE you were given when younger was accurate and correct?

**Mother:** No, it was correct, but you just were not given enough sex education, not even from school; nothing like these got told.

**Father:** I think as well though when you did get the brief sex education that we got, what you learnt would have been forgotten by the time you started experimenting with sex and things associated with sex. It was never reinforced like it is today.

**Researcher:** How did you find out SRE for yourself?

**Mother:** Friends, mainly.

**Father:** Yes, friends and magazines.

**Researcher:** Did you learn any SRE from listening to other people's conversations?

**Father:** I don't know if it was by listening to other conversations but you talked to you mates a lot and you would use dirty mags to try and understand more about the things people just didn't discuss. You just had a giggle about it.

**Researcher:** What age do you think you were when you felt you had adequate knowledge of SRE topics?

**Father:** Probably late teens.

**Mother:** I think early twenties for me, if I am to be honest simply because it wasn't really discussed.

**Researcher:** With hindsight do you think you knew enough sex education at your different developmental stages to prepare you for adult life?

**Mother:** No, not really but you did learn a lot from friends.

**Father:** No you just learnt as you went along.

**Researcher:** If you look back to the SRE that was taught when you were younger, how do you think it could have been improved to provide you with the information you wanted or needed at the time?

**Father:** I think the technology wasn't there then, but I think it would have been better if they had something that was shown like the CD, especially because I don't think teachers were keen on talking about it.

**Mother:** Yes, it wasn't an open culture like it is today, so I think if people were more liberal then, the conversation would have been greater, which would have made a huge difference.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the SRE that was taught, compared with today's teaching?

**Father:** Far better than what we ever got; they get told a lot more.

**Mother:** Yes, especially in relation to feelings, emotions and how these fit into a sexual relationship, so it is a great deal better.

**Researcher:** How was sex discussed and why do you think it was discussed in this way? (I.e. embarrassment?)

**Father:** It wasn't really discussed.

**Mother:** Yes, it just wasn't the norm.

**Researcher:** Do you as a parent feel you have the up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach your child about sexual matters?

**Father:** Aw, yes.

**Mother:** I was quite shocked when they said they would not ask me. I think I do know the facts about sex, emotions and things like that but I don't think most parents know all the up-to-date terms that young people are told about.

**Researcher:** Which parent mainly talks to their child/children about sexual matters?

**Son 1:** If it was either I suppose it would be dad; it is embarrassing discussing sexual matters with your mother, especially as she doesn't know what it is like from a male view.

**Son 2:** Yes, plus mum gets embarrassed talking to us about sex.

**Mother:** I do not.

**Father:** I think sometimes it is embarrassing; we are just unsure of the terminology you use, because it was different for us and you lot are a lots more open about things than we were.

**Mother:** Yes, possibly, but I think you get embarrassed because of the questions I ask when you tell me things.

**Son 1:** Yes, I know but you keep nosing into my private life and I don't know what to say.

**Researcher:** Why is it this parent? (i.e. factors)

**Neither of the son's claim to talk to their parents about sexual matters.**

**Researcher:** Do you think more sex education is focused around female children rather than male children?

**Father:** Yes, but I don't think girls receive more sex education, but I think they need to as a lot more things are happening to them as they grow up and they have a lot more changes to cope with.

**Researcher:** At what age do you want your children to know about sexual matters?

**Mother:** It is important to me that they learn about things when they are ready, but I would say in primary school and also in secondary school whereby drop-in sessions are available for them to ask more if they don't understand.

**Researcher:** Are you, or have you been aware of the SRE being taught to you child at school?

**Mother:** Yes, well maybe not the content, but I have seen the SRE policy and I know how important the school views sex education as part of the curriculum, so I think they will be teaching SRE to their highest ability.

**Researcher:** Who initiates the conversations regarding sexual matters?

**Father:** I don't think any of us openly ask each other question but I think we (him and his wife) are often in the background as they all talk.

**Mother:** Yes and with them all being of varied ages, they feel more comfortable talking together.

**Researcher:** What topics do parents discuss with their children, and at what age and is it different for sons and daughters?

**Mother:** I don't think we have necessarily sat and discussed things formally, but we have left books out and they have asked us things when they were younger.

**Father:** Yes, but I think the school have more of an influence over the sex education they are picking up on, and I think as well they just learn from their peers as they develop.

**Researcher:** What topics do parents NOT discuss with their children?

**Father:** I can not think of any topic I wouldn't discuss with them if they wanted to.

**Mother:** No neither can I, but I think they would educate us rather than us educate them.

**Researcher:** Where do you think your child will learn about the sexual matters if you don't teach them?

**Mother:** Mainly from each other or their peers.

**Father:** I think on top of that, the school add the facts and they learn that way.

**Researcher:** Are there any restrictions on not discussing sexual matters within the family amongst yourselves?

**Mother:** I wouldn't say restrictions, but I am sometimes concerned at the conversations they may have in front of my youngest son. We have to sometimes steer where the conversation is going with regards to him.

**Researcher:** Do you feel that your family talk openly about sexual matters within the family?

**Mother:** Well, after today I am not quite sure. I thought we were quite open with each other, but I do know that we are a close family and I suppose they just have preferences for finding out certain sexual information.

**Father:** Yes, but I think when kids are stuck they come to you, but I think sometimes we are like old people to them who are not going to know what it is like for this generation.

**Researcher:** How do you think other families communicate SRE, compared to yours?

**Mother:** I don't know really.

**Researcher:** What main forms of the media (computers, magazines, etc) do adolescents use to learn about issues regarding SRE?

**Son 2:** A video or soaps because you get to learn more if there is a story line that you can follow. It is a better way of learning rather than just having the formal education.

**Son 1:** Yes, it probably is better like that because you can also form you own opinion and your own thoughts on things.

**Son 2:** I haven't been on any web-sites to find out any information, but if I wanted to find out something more about what I have seen on television, I would use computers.

**Researcher:** What sorts of things do you learn from these sources that you do not get taught about elsewhere?

**Son 2:** Well you would get the facts from proper web-sites, but from the television you just see what it is like from other people's point of view.

**Son 1:** Yes, I suppose you learn by watching how other people manage certain situations.

**Researcher:** Do you prefer to use these sources to learn about SRE?

**Son 1:** Yes, because you don't have to talk about what you are thinking, unless you want to.

**Son 2:** Yes, I do as well.

**Researcher:** What impact do you think the media (computers, magazines, etc) have on adolescents regarding the SRE that they learn?

**Father:** Well, to be honest, I think it does teach them a lot and it can help generate conversations so they can learn more.

**Mother:** Yes, it can be educational and I know they say we don't talk about sex, but the television has often lead us to discuss sexual matters, such as Eastenders and different sexualities or teenage pregnancies.

**Researcher:** So do you think the media is a good thing or a bad thing when teaching young people about sexual matters (Parents)?

**Mother:** I think it can be a bit of both.

**Father:** Yes and you have to take the good with the bad really; sometimes it is too explicit, but other times it is fine and educational.

**Researcher:** Do you think parent's religion impacts on the SRE they give to their children?

**Father:** I think the values and attitudes are given, but I don't think you could deny children sex education, especially with the way the media cover it and because schools have to teach it.

**Mother:** Yes, I think religion is based on a value system more than a topic that prevents sex education.

**Son 2:** Yes, but the school we go to because of being part of a Catholic religion doesn't see it that way, in that they decide what we should and shouldn't be taught. I would prefer teachers to give us the education, but they don't tell us everything, or some teachers are not open about all the facts when giving sex education.

**Researcher:** Do you think the religious beliefs you have been brought up with influences the SRE you receive?

**Son 2:** Yes, because when I went to Newlands (secondary school) with it being a Catholic school they would just say '*no sex before marriage*' and therefore you didn't get taught much about sex. I think it is better now because we had younger teachers coming into the school with modern ideas of teaching who were more up-to-date. Sex is taught at a younger age now through compared to when we first went to secondary school and it seems as though it is a lot more detailed.

The family sat down to watch the CD together and chose to explore the virtual clinic section. The mother used the mouse to explore the section. The two sons were very embarrassed and did not take much notice of what the mother was doing. They said that they would prefer to watch it another time when it was just them together, however the following questions were asked.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Mother:** I think it was good.

**Father:** Very informative and looks like a fun CD.

Both sons clamed up and were not keen to talk, but they agreed that it would be okay to come back and ask questions once they had chance to look at it without their parents. The researcher left the post sexual knowledge questionnaire for completion after sons and their parents explored the multimedia program separately. The researcher went back a week later to have the follow-up sexual knowledge questionnaire completed and the following questions were asked:

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Mother:** When we (husband and herself) went through it wasn't what I was expecting. It was better than I thought it was going to be.

**Father:** Yes, it looks a good way to learn about things that some people find it difficult to discuss.

**Son 1:** I thought it was a lot better than the stuff they give you at school to learn about sex.

**Son 2:** When we (two sons) watched it I thought it was going to be babyish, but it wasn't. Even though there were lots of bright colours there the scenarios in the different sections were good.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Mother:** I thought that the content was good, but I thought the '*Buzzwords*' were really good in that it acted like a little dictionary and you could print things off.

**Son 2:** I think the story lines and the way the fly would come in to explain things.

**Son 1:** Yes and I know it sounds stupid even tough it was a cartoon type CD, but it allowed you to put yourself in that position.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the least?

**Son 2:** None, it was good.

**Son 1:** Nods in agreement with his brother.

**Father:** Yes, especially the way it covered so many topics.

**Mother:** Yes, it was really good.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Mother:** Anywhere from nine upwards.

**Father:** Yes, for particular sections such as puberty, but about 11 with the information on contraception and STIs.

**Son 2:** From about 10/11 up to about 16, but not for anyone older.

**Son 1:** Yes, I agree.

**Researcher:** Was there any aspect of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Son 2:** All of it; I couldn't go through it with my parents because it would just be too embarrassing.

**Son 1:** Yes, it is too personal and they would ask too many questions.

**Mother:** Well I wouldn't feel embarrassed or uncomfortable watching it with any of my children.

**Father:** No, neither would I.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Son 2:** ALL OF IT.

**Son 1:** I agree.

**Mother:** Well I think I have talked to my daughters more than my sons about the contents.

**Researcher:** Why would you say that was?

**Mother:** Just because they are more open.

**Researcher:** Would you prefer to talk to your parents rather than find out about SRE aspects by using the CD?

**Both sons laugh and say 'CD' at the same time.**

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Father:** I think it would.

**Son 2:** Yes, but not with our family.

**Mother:** I think if your sisters were talking about some of the aspects in the CD it would increase communication within the family.

**Son 2:** Yes, but they don't ask loads of questions like you and dad would.

**Mother:** You make us out to be really nosy.

**The family all laugh together.**

**Researcher:** As a parent do you feel you could talk openly with your child about all aspects raised within the CD or is there things on the CD you were not aware of as a parent?

**Mother:** Yes, I think I could if they wanted to talk to me.

**Father:** I think we definitely have the knowledge to discuss all aspects in the CD, but we don't push them into talking to us, but hopefully one day they will feel more comfortable and would come to us if they needed us for anything.

**Researcher:** A final question I would like to ask you two (the sons) is would you have given the same responses to the questions if you and your parents had been interviewed separately?

**Family laugh.**

**Son 2:** Definitely. I think I would have been able to answer your questions in more depth, but sorry I just can't talk about anything to do with sex in from of them (his parents).

**Son 1:** I agree, it is just too embarrassing.

**Researcher:** Thank you for being so honest. I thought I knew the answer to the question before asking it, but I needed to ask it anyway for clarity.

The family were thanked for their time and a de-brief of the study was given.



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## **Insert 3**

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**STUDY II:  
TRANSCRIPTIONS OF FAMILY INTERVIEWS  
WHEN PARENTS AND CHILDREN ARE  
INTERVIEWED SEPERATELY  
(including pilot study)**

## **Pilot Study for Study II**

**Participants:** Female parent (47 years) and daughter (15).

**Consent form signed and retained by the family and researcher.**

**Researcher:** Thank you. I would also like to ask if it is possible for either one of you to leave the room so I could do the first interview?

Mother and daughter decided that the daughter should be interviewed first. The mother was then asked to take the demographics form and the '*Knowledge Quiz*' to another room in the house and complete them both. The researcher then started the interview process by asking the daughter the following questions:

### **Interview with Daughter**

**Researcher:** What sex and relationship education (SRE) has been taught to you?

**Daughter:** We have been told about puberty, relationships, contraception and we are going to have a lesson on STIs in PSHE in a couple of week's time.

**Researcher:** What age would you have been when receiving this education?

**Daughter:** Well the puberty was in year 6, when I would have been about 11 to 12 (years of age) and then I would have been about 13 to 14 when I got told about relationships and contraception.

**Researcher:** So have you only been taught SRE at secondary school or were you taught some things at primary school?

**Daughter:** We were given some sex education in the last year of primary school, but that only covered things briefly about puberty.

**Researcher:** Great and what size group was SRE taught in and was it of mixed or single-sex classes?

**Daughter:** In primary, and the first time we got taught about SRE in secondary the classes were separated between boys and girls, but now in secondary school we get told about things all together.

**Researcher:** So how many were in the class?

**Daughter:** About 30 of us.

**Researcher:** Is this an ideal setting for you or would you prefer different sizes of groups and gender when being taught SRE? If different, how?

**Daughter:** I don't mind. It doesn't bother me whether it is boys and girls mixed.

**Researcher:** Great, so was signposting given to say where you get further information or advice?

**Daughter:** I don't remember whether they did but there is a centre at school where you can go and get information and leaflets from at any time.

**Researcher:** Who has taught you the most about the SRE? (i.e. mother, father, school, etc).

**Daughter:** I would mainly say my mum and school.

**Researcher:** Why do you prefer to talk to this person about sex (Is it possible due to being the same sex?)?

**Daughter:** I don't know really. I suppose me and my mum talk about lots of stuff.

**Researcher:** Okay, so at what age were SRE first taught and what topics were discussed?

**Daughter:** I don't remember really. The earliest I remember talking about sex in when I did puberty when I was 11 to 12.

**Researcher:** So when you have talked about sexual issues with your mum who would you say normally initiates the discussion of SRE?

**Daughter:** Both really I would say.

**Researcher:** So would you say you find it embarrassing to discuss sexual matters?

**Daughter:** No, but I think there are always things that are private and that you want to keep yourself and I suppose I wouldn't want to discuss certain thought and feelings because that is private to me.

**Researcher:** What topics are embarrassing to talk about? (e.g. relationships)

**Daughter:** I wouldn't say I was embarrassed to discuss any particular topic, but I would find it horrible to discuss things that are private to me.

**Researcher:** Why do you get embarrassed talking about these topics?

**Daughter:** Simply because everyone has the right to have private thoughts.

**Researcher:** Okay, I respect that but can I ask who would you like to teach you about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** Probably the school nurse.

**Researcher:** Okay, Why and for what reason is this?

**Daughter:** I just think she will know more with it being her job.

**Researcher:** Do you think that you pick things up from other people's conversations regarding SRE?

**Daughter:** Oh yes. I think everyone does just so they can find out more about different things.

**Researcher:** What sorts of sexual matters do you discuss with friends?

**Daughter:** Anything and everything.

**Researcher:** Are these friends of the same or opposite sex?

**Daughter:** Mainly the same-sex, but I also have a few friends who are boys, but that's it. They are just friends.

**Researcher:** What makes you want to talk to your friends about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** I don't know. I suppose I mainly talk to my friends who are girls more than boys and I suppose you tell them so they will tell you what it is like for them. I suppose it's how we find out about people and how we find out that we are not alone in what we are going through.

**Researcher:** What aspects of SRE do you learn more about when talking to friends?

**Daughter:** Well basically what I have just said I suppose. It is also good to know what they think about things as well.

**Researcher:** Which parent do you mainly talk to about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** My mum.

**Researcher:** Why is it this parent? (i.e. factors)

**Daughter:** Because I spend more time with her than my dad and she is a girl. I think I also know my mum better than I know my dad. I would talk to my dad and he always says I can talk to him about anything, but I wouldn't talk to him about sex and things like that. I might tell him about a boyfriend that I am going out with, but other stuff I wouldn't.

**Researcher:** If Mother – why do you think the mum teaches the most about SRE, rather than your father?

**Daughter:** Probably because she spends more time with me and probably knows me a bit better than my dad.

**Researcher:** Why do you prefer to talk to this parent about sexual matters? (Is it possible due to being the same sex???)

**Daughter:** I think it is because she knows what I am going through with being a girl herself.

**Researcher:** Okay, who would you say initiates the conversations regarding sexual matters?

**Daughter:** Both of us probably because we never stop talking.

**Researcher:** What SRE topics have your parents discussed with you, and at what age did these conversations occur?

**Daughter:** I can mainly remember the conversation regarding '*periods*' that I had with my mum when I was about 11 years old, but other times when we have talked it has just been brief when I don't know saying, watching TV or cooking tea together.

**Researcher:** Okay, so you mainly have these conversations when watching TV or cooking in the kitchen. Yes, I will also go and talk to her when she is in bed.

**Researcher:** What topics do your parents NOT discuss with you concerning SRE?

**Daughter:** Yes, there are some things but I would rather not say.

**Researcher:** Why do you think your parents omit these topics regarding sexual matters? (i.e. embarrassment?)

**Daughter:** I don't know I suppose I would just like to keep some things to myself.

**Researcher:** Where do you think you will learn about the sexual matters if your parent's don't teach you?

**Daughter:** Well probably from school, or by going and getting information from the '*Track Centre*' (school drop in centre) where you can get leaflets and things to teach you about different things associated with sex.

**Researcher:** Do you think your parents have the most up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach you about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** Yes, probably.

**Researcher:** Are there any restrictions on not discussing sexual matters within the family amongst yourselves?

**Daughter:** I don't think so.

**Researcher:** How do you overcome these restrictions placed on the family when discussing sexual matters?

**Daughter:** There aren't any I don't think.

**Researcher:** Do you feel that your family talk openly about sexual matters within the family?

**Daughter:** I would say we are quite open, but I wouldn't say the topic comes up very often.

**Researcher:** How do you think other families communicate SRE, compared to yours?

**Daughter:** A lot of my friends don't talk to their parents, whereas I think I tell my mum pretty much everything.

**Researcher:** Do you think in general more sex education is given to female children rather than male children?

**Daughter:** Yes, but I think girls are just a lot more open in general when talking about things.

**Researcher:** Why do you think this is?

**Daughter:** I don't know really. It is just the male friends that I have would not talk to their parents about sex. I don't know why this is, they just don't. It is probably to do with the amount of responsibility that is put on girls. I think it is shocking, but pregnancy and contraception mostly affects girls, more than it does boys.

**Researcher:** At what age do you think your parents want you to know about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** I don't know really, but probably from about the age of 11.

**Researcher:** Do the school involve your parents in the SRE you receive?

**Daughter:** No, they didn't and if you go to '*Track*' that is all confidential so parents are not involved in that either.

**Researcher:** Do you want your parents to have more involvement in the SRE you receive in school?

**Daughter:** Not really. I think it is good that I can find out information from people that don't know me, but then find out more personal stuff from my parents.

**Researcher:** If no, how do you think the school could improve their approach to involving parents more?

**Daughter:** I think it is fine the way it is. If there is too much parental input in schools then I don't think some people would find out things, especially for those who do not talk to their parents because it is the only way they find things out.

**Researcher:** What main forms of the media (computers, magazines etc) do you use to learn about issues regarding SRE?

**Daughter:** Mainly the television and problem pages of teenage magazines.

**Researcher:** What sorts of things do you learn from these sources that you do not get taught about elsewhere?

**Daughter:** Well, you always get told about teenage pregnancies and how teenagers cope when they have children at a young age.

**Researcher:** Do you prefer to use these sources to learn about SRE?

**Daughter:** Sometimes, but I also like to talk to my mum and best friends about things.

**Researcher:** If so, why?

**Daughter:** Just so you get things from their point of view, really. You can learn more from talking to people.

**Researcher:** What impact do you think the media (computers, magazines, etc) has regarding the SRE that you learn?

**Daughter:** It gives you an idea of what to do in certain situations.

**Researcher:** Do you think the media act as a deterrent when showing the consequences and negativity associated with some sexual behaviours/issues?

**Daughter:** Yes, I do.

**Researcher:** Do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing?

**Daughter:** Good because it brings a lot of things to the surface which might not get mentioned without showing it on TV. If they had not mentioned some things like gay relationships people would not have come out and been as happy, but now it is seen as the norm by some people. I have friends at school who say they are gay and that is good that they feel they can be honest and mention it.

**Researcher:** Do you think the religious beliefs you have been brought up with influences the SRE you receive?

**Daughter:** I think it might have if I had been religious, but I am not. I do have a friend who goes to a Catholic school and she doesn't get told about the things that I do such as contraception. She doesn't have anything like 'Track' at her school, but we tell her the things that she doesn't get told about at school, so I suppose religion does impact on what you get told, but it doesn't affect me because I am not religious.

**Researcher:** Well, thank you very much, that's been great. Are there any questions that you think need to be changed or did you think that was okay?

**Daughter:** No I didn't have any problems with the questions. I understood what you were asking.

**Researcher:** Brilliant, well can I ask if you can fill out the demographics form and the quiz and would you be so kind as to ask your mum if she could come and be interviewed now?

**Mother returns and the following questions are asked.**

### **Interview with Mother**

**Researcher:** What sex and relationship education (SRE) was taught to you as parents when you were younger?

**Mother:** I don't remember there being any. I do remember first year in junior where I remember this boy saying that a baby comes from the mothers belly and thought '*what a load of rubbish*' and then the teacher saying 'yes' and I can't remember anything after that. Then in secondary school we got the basic biology which covered the sexual reproduction of frogs, then rabbits and then somehow it worked around to humans. I think you were meant to pick up the rest for yourself.

**Researcher:** Which of your parents taught you about sexual matters, and why do you think it was this parent?

**Mother:** Neither of them. My younger sister who is 7 years younger still did not get told about sexual matters from our parents. They would just tell her to come and ask me or my older sister. My step-sister was also my age and she always knew a lot more than me, so if I needed to know more I would ask her, but my parents have never talked to me about sex, no.

**Researcher:** Why do you think that was?

**Mother:** Em, I think it was just the way they were brought up and it was just an embarrassing thing to talk about. I mean if something came on the TV you were sent to bed or it got turned over and that's just the way it was. Now that they are older they are a lot more open, but they couldn't tell you things. Even if there is a funny joke that has a sexual connotation you almost have to explain the punch-line because they don't have the knowledge nor the ability to sit and talk about sexual matters.

**Researcher:** Did your own parents ever comment on the sex education that they received when they were younger?

**Mother:** No, I don't know what sex education they got. I think the fact that they didn't talk about it themselves implies that they did not get much sex education and it was a very taboo topic.

**Researcher:** With hindsight, do you think your parents had sufficient knowledge to teach you about sexual matters?

**Mother:** No, not really.

**Researcher:** Do you feel your family talked openly about sexual matters when you were younger?

**Mother:** Definitely not.

**Researcher:** If no, why do you think sexual matters were not discussed more openly within your family when you were younger?

**Mother:** Possibly embarrassment and lack of knowledge themselves.

**Researcher:** Who taught the SRE? (i.e. mother, father, school etc)

**Mother:** I would say from a biological point of view then that would have been the school. If it was to do with anything associated with relationships I would just have asked my step-sister.

**Researcher:** At what age was SRE taught and what topics were discussed?

**Mother:** The earliest recollection I have got was when I was about 7 when hearing that the baby came from the mummy's tummy and even then I think I had been told I was found on the railway line. My other sister was found under the gooseberry bush and I can remember thinking they are much more feasible options than coming from my mother belly button (laughter). I didn't dare mention it at home but I remember telling my cousins. You see initially I didn't live with my parents, I lived with my grand-parents and I can remember going around on the day my mother gave birth to my brother because she had him at home, and I can remember I had just been for a walk with my grand-dad and when we came back there was a baby there and I was told he had been found down the Dene and I never questioned anything.

**Researcher:** How and in what context was SRE taught?

**Please see previous question.**

**Researcher:** Were there any aspects of SRE that you still wanted to know more about?

**Mother:** Now, no not really. Even looked back I think I had quite an innocent upbringing and if your parents told you something you just believed it. I can remember my step-mother telling us about periods and I didn't believe that either. You see when I was younger contraception was only used to prevent pregnancy and not STIs like it is today. You see when I was younger it was before the event of AIDS, so I think attitudes changed but before then you would hear of chlamydia, but not all the STIs like there is today. I think the sex education that we got taught was '*Good girls, don't!*' and that was it.

**Researcher:** With hindsight, do you think the topics associated with the SRE you were given were younger was accurate and correct?

**Mother:** Totally, I was found on the railway line (laughter). Very inaccurate from adults, but quite believable from sisters and cousins.

**Researcher:** How did you find out SRE for yourself?

**Mother:** Well I suppose it would be just things that I heard even though it was not discussed widely and then I married the first man I sex with. I think because sex was not part of my life up until then I never needed to know about things associated with my sexual health because it was always on the fringes of my life until I met my husband and then you learn from each other.

**Researcher:** Did you learn any SRE from listening to other people conversations?

**Mother:** Yes definitely, but it was more about what my friends said rather than what adults talked about.

**Researcher:** What age do you think you were when you felt you had adequate knowledge of SRE topics?

**Mother:** Probably in my 30s. It was things I would know a little bit about but it didn't affect me.

**Researcher:** With hindsight, do you think you knew enough sex education at your different developmental stages to prepare you for adult life?

**Mother:** Yes, I don't think I was ever in situations that I did not know what I was getting into. I never felt I was in a position of ignorance.

**Researcher:** If you look back to the SRE that was taught when you were younger, how do you think it could have been improved to provide you with the information you wanted or needed at the time?

**Mother:** Em, I don't and I don't know what is taught within sex education now, but I think as I say STDs wasn't a big thing there so I was not lacking anything there, and with pregnancy you knew about the pill. The big thing here was the pill because at the time the main thing was to avoid pregnancy and not protect yourself from any type of disease.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the SRE that was taught, compared with today's teaching?

**Mother:** I think it is so much better today because it was not existent in my day when I was my daughter's age, but like I say I don't know what is taught. She will come in and talk about condoms, STDs and things like that and I think that sometimes sex education is becoming more mechanic compared to my day. In my day it was just '*good girls, don't*' where now they seem to be saying if you are make sure you protect yourself and I think they need to be careful with the messages they are sending out to young people. There should be an element of it but they need to teach a morality about it as well in that '*yes, sex is very nice, but it should be about the relationship behind it*'.

**Researcher:** How was sex discussed when you were younger and why do you think it was discussed in this way (i.e. embarrassment)?

**Mother:** I think it was embarrassing for them because it was like that for their parents, but I try and be a lot more open with my daughter. I know sometimes though, it is not me she wants to talk to because the information I give is not for a 15 year old, it is more giving her the information that I have learnt and want to pass on to her to make sure she doesn't make the same mistakes I did. Saying that though she has to go through it herself to make her a stronger person and give her chance to experience and gain knowledge so she won't make the same mistake again. So I suppose I expect her to maybe talk about relationships and things like that with her peers, but I think we do talk openly about factual things when she wants to know something.

**Researcher:** Do you as a parent feel you have the up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach your child about sexual matters?

**Mother:** Yes, I think I do and if I didn't I would know where to find it. I also think it is important for her to know what to do and where to go if she doesn't feel comfortable talking to me. That's why I feel comfortable taking her to the family planning when I need to go. This way I think she will learn and be able make choices for herself.

**Researcher:** What sex and relationship education (SRE) has been taught to your child?



**Mother:** I am not able to say what exactly has been taught, but I roughly know when she is going to get sex education, but I am not sure of the content that is taught.

**Researcher:** What size of group was SRE taught in and was it mixed or single-sex group?

**Mother:** Couldn't tell you, sorry.

**Researcher:** Do you know if signposting was given to say where they could get further information or advice?

**Mother:** No, but I do know there is a drop-in at school and like I say she knows where the family planning is for more information is she needs, or wants it.

**Researcher:** Who has taught SRE to your child (i.e. mother, father, school, etc)?

**Mother:** I think school, peers and myself.

**Researcher:** Why do you think they prefer to learn about sexual matters from this person (Is it possible due to being the same sex)?

**Mother:** I think it is to do with the different types of relationships you build with different people. You can learn from so many people.

**Researcher:** At what age was SRE taught to your child and what topics were discussed?

**Mother:** At a time when she is ready. Every parent wants to keep their children safe, but I think teaching about sex is an individual thing, but for her I think from about the age of 12 onwards.

**Researcher:** Who initiated the discussion of SRE?

**Mother:** I initiated the conversation about periods, but she has also asked me about things, so I suppose both of us.

**Researcher:** Was it embarrassing for you as a parent to discuss sexual matters with your child/ren?

**Mother:** I think it is embarrassing for her, but it is not embarrassing for me.

**Researcher:** After discussions, what aspects of SRE do you think your child still wanted to know more about?

**Mother:** I am not sure about that, but I think if she needed or wanted to know more she has the '*know-how*' to find out what she needs, either by asking me, friends or going and getting the information from relevant sources.

**Researcher:** Who would you like to teach your child about sexual matters?

**Mother:** I would like to think me, but I also know she talks a lot with her friends, but we do talk when she wants to or if I think there is something she needs to know, such as when she was getting to the age of knowing about periods and things like that.

**Researcher:** Why, and what is the reason for this?

**Mother:** I would like to teach her because then I know that she is getting the right information with the right messages, but I think she will talk with who she feels most comfortable talking to at that particular time.

**Researcher:** What sorts of sexual matters do you think your child discuss with her friends?

**Mother:** Probably everything and anything, but I think if she is unsure of something she would just ask me.

**Researcher:** Are these friends of the same or opposite sex?

**Mother:** Both.

**Researcher:** Why do you think your child wants to talk to her friends about sexual matters?

**Mother:** I think it is that they can relate to the same changes and experiences. I mean if I talk to her about sex she will go '*aw mam, I don't want to know*'. I think she does know things but just can't bare the thought of her parents doing it more than once.

**Researcher:** What aspects of SRE do you think she will learn more about when talking to their friend?

**Mother:** Em I am not quite sure, but I suppose it is getting reassurance of the feelings and changes that are happening not just physically, but mentally also.

**Researcher:** Which parent mainly talks to their children about sexual matters?

**Mother:** Me, I don't think she would talk to her dad about things.

**Researcher:** Why is it this parent (i.e. factors)?

**Mother:** Just for the fact that I think we spend more time together and therefore we feel closer and talk to each other more.

**Researcher:** Who initiates the conversations regarding sexual matters?

**Mother:** Me and her, but it depends what we are talking about.

**Researcher:** What topics do parents discuss with their children, and at what age and is it different for sons and daughters?

**Mother:** Well I think you prepare them for the different developmental stages that they are going to enter into, but I have always answered questions honestly when she has asked me things.

**Researcher:** When and what circumstances are these conversations likely to occur?

**Mother:** Anytime really, when we are together and things prompt us such as Big Brother. We will discuss things when we are just spending time together.

**Researcher:** What topics do parents NOT discuss with their children?

**Mother:** I don't think there is anything I wouldn't discuss with her. I want her to have the knowledge so she can make her own choices.

**Researcher:** Where do you think your child will learn about the sexual matters if you don't teach her?

**Mother:** Probably her friends or at school.

**Researcher:** Are there any restrictions on not discussing sexual matters within the family amongst yourselves?

**Mother:** No, I don't think so.

**Researcher:** Do you feel that your family talk openly about sexual matters within the family?

**Mother:** Yes, I think we are quite open. I don't think there are things we wouldn't discuss, except if she didn't want to talk about a particular topic, then I wouldn't push it.

**Researcher:** How do you think other families communicate SRE, compared to yours?

**Mother:** Well I don't know really. I know my daughters friends don't often talk to their parents, especially boys. I also know that my family, such as my sisters and cousins don't tell or prepare their children for experimenting or about matters to give them the knowledge that they need to know.

**Researcher:** Do you think in general more sex education is given to female children rather than male children?

**Mother:** I think they both get the same amount; it is just driven by the gender and what they are likely to go through.

**Researcher:** At what age do you want your child to know about sexual matters?

**Mother:** Once again I think it is driven by her, but I would want her to know about the things she needs to before it happens.

**Researcher:** Do the school involve parents in the educating of the children?

**Mother:** I don't think so. I am not aware of the sex education that the school has delivered to my daughter. She will tell me, but the school doesn't.

**Researcher:** If no, how do you think the school could improve their approach to involving parents more?

**Mother:** Yes I would. Not just in relation to sex, but also drugs. I am not saying going into the school and helping the teachers, but I would like to know about the topics that they cover and the times they do this.

**Researcher:** What main forms of the media (computers, magazines etc) does your child use to learn about issues regarding SRE?

**Mother:** I don't know. She may look for stuff on-line, but I don't know. She also buys teenage magazines which have sexual content. She also watches TV. Pretty much anything I think.

**Researcher:** What sorts of things do you think they learn from these sources that they do not get taught about elsewhere?

**Mother:** Anything really, they can be so explicit.

**Researcher:** Do you think they prefer to use these sources to learn about SRE?

**Mother:** I don't know really. I mean from TV and the programmes she watches, it can stimulate conversations for her to find out more and if she didn't watch that then those conversations might not occur.

**Researcher:** What impact do you think the media (computers, magazines, etc) have on adolescents regarding the SRE that they learn?

**Mother:** I think they give a lot of information, some not so relevant to the person that is reading it, but they are not going to read the aspects if they can relate to it from their own experience or from one of their friends.

**Researcher:** Do you think the media act as a deterrent when showing the consequences and negativity associated with some sexual behaviours/issues?

**Mother:** Yes. I think they can, but I think they should have more documentaries on aspects of sex, rather than just giving them information and them sometimes not knowing the full consequences if they choose to act upon it.

**Researcher:** Do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing?

**Mother:** My gut reaction is to say no, but I also appreciate that some parents find it difficult to talk about sex, and I know that some schools, such as Catholic schools do not give the full information so in that sense the media could give them the information that they are not being told, but in the other sense for those children that do get sex education from school and home, the media can sometimes pass on the wrong messages without bringing morals into what information they are giving.

**Researcher:** Do you think the parent's religion impacts on the SRE they give to their children?

**Mother:** Yes, I do with the families that I know who are Catholic. I know one of my friends feels very uncomfortable talking about it and when her son was 16 and was seeing a girl she just said *"I don't want to discuss this any further but, I have put condoms in the draw in the bathroom. Use them as I don't want you coming home saying you have got your girlfriend pregnant"*. Now I don't know if she has the knowledge to tell her son the

facts or if it is just the fact that it goes against her religion, but I know it has an impact over what she tells him based on her own beliefs.

**Mother:** Brilliant. Well thank you for answering these questions, but can I now ask you and your daughter to look at the CD and give me your views on what you think?

**Mother:** Yes, I will just get her.

Both the mother and daughter come back to the same room and explore the CD. They chose the section; 'TRUE OR FALSE'. The daughter did not know some of the answers, but the mother explained those that she did not know. They also had a laugh together about some of the questions that were asked. They completed the sexual knowledge questionnaire again before answering the following questions:

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Mother:** It was okay.

**Daughter:** Yes, okay.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Daughter:** The colours.

**Mother:** Yes, it was aesthetically pleasing.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Daughter:** The fly, because he was annoying.

**Mother:** Why what was he doing?

**Daughter:** Just standing there saying "*Great*".

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Daughter:** I don't know.

**Mother:** Maybe for a bit younger, about 13 to 14 years of age.

**Researcher:** Were there any aspect of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Mother:** No.

**Daughter:** No, I hate her! She has taken ages to answer the questions when she knew I wanted to go out. **Both laugh.**

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Mother:** No.

**Daughter:** I don't know without going through all the sections later.

**Researcher:** Would you prefer to talk to your parents rather than find out about SRE aspects by using the CD?

**Daughter:** I don't know really.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Daughter:** Yes.

**Mother:** Yes, definitely with families who find it difficult to raise the subject, or for those parents who do not have the knowledge to tell their children about sex and sexual matters.

**Researcher:** Great, well thank you very much for your time.

**GO BACK ONE WEEK LATER** and ask questions to gain clarity as to how the CD has broken down any barriers when discussing SRE within the family. The follow-up sexual knowledge questionnaire quiz was also completed once again by the mother and daughter and the following questions were asked:

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Mother:** It was okay with the bits that I saw when you were here last.

**Daughter:** Laughter, okay.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Mother:** I didn't see enough of it to make an opinion, but I think it was aimed at younger children.

**Daughter:** Yes, younger than me, it was a bit babyish.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Daughter:** That fly really annoyed me talking all the time.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Daughter:** About 12 or 13.

**Researcher:** Were there any aspect of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Mother:** No, but would you watch that with your dad?

**Daughter:** Not watch it, but I wouldn't feel uncomfortable discussing some of the things in it with him.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Mother:** No, I think she has asked most things.

**Researcher:** Would you prefer to talk to your parents rather than find out about SRE aspects by using the CD?

**Daughter:** Yes, I would just ask if I wanted to know something.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Daughter:** Yes.

**Mother:** Yes, especially if you have families who just don't know how to talk about sexual matters with their children. I am sure it would start up different conversations for parents and children to talk about.

**Researcher:** So would you say the CD has broken down any barriers when discussing SRE within the family?

**Mother:** Not within ours because we are quite open anyway, but I am sure it would in other families who do not discuss sexual matters.

**End of interview.**

## 11<sup>th</sup> Family Interview - Study II

**Participants:** Female parent (51 years) and 2 sons - Son 1 (16 years), and son 2 (14 years). **Father Absent.**

**Consent form signed and retained by the family and researcher.**

**Researcher:** Thank you. I would also like to ask if it is possible for either one of you to leave the room so I could do the first interview.

Mother and sons decided that the sons should be interviewed first. The mother was then asked to take the demographics form and the sexual knowledge questionnaire to another room in the house and complete them both. The researcher then started the interview process by asking the sons the following questions.

### Interview with Sons

**Researcher:** What sex and relationship education (SRE) has been taught to you both as adolescents?

**Son 1:** In year 6 we were given *'The Video'* and then in year eight we were also given another sex education session and then that was it.

**Researcher:** Was this session the sex education roadshow?

**Son 1:** Yes, we had that as well.

**Son 2:** Yes, so did I in year 10.

**Researcher:** What sorts of things have you been told about, then?

**Son 1:** Year 6 was all about puberty and the roadshow covered pretty much everything such as contraception, puberty, STIs and relationships.

**Researcher:** Was this the same for you (son 2)?

**Son 2:** Yes because we both go to the same school and I don't think we get anymore sex education other than what we have had up until now. The other thing I had though was in year 11; this old lady of about 60 years old came in and went over the same things again, but with models. It was bad!

**Both sons laugh and cringe.**

**Son 1:** That was so bad, especially when she was putting the condom on the demonstrator.

**Son 2:** Yes, it is not quite the same when you think of the wrinkly old hands.

**Both sons laugh again and put their heads down thinking about it.**

**Researcher:** So can I ask what size of group is SRE taught in and is it mixed or single-sex?

**Son 2:** The puberty bit was split into boys and girls, but the rest of the sex education that has been given has been taught in form groups.

**Son 1:** Yes, that is the same for me.

**Researcher:** Is this an ideal setting or would you prefer different sizes of groups and gender when being taught SRE? If different, how?

**Son 2:** Don't mind really.

**Son 1:** No neither do I, but I do wish the old woman hadn't come in to teach us. It just felt strange.

**Son 2:** Yes, it was like your granny teaching you, which is just so inappropriate.

**Researcher:** Yes, so was any signposting given to say where you get further information or advice?

**Son 1:** There were loads of help-lines and you could go to the youth club as well if you needed more information, which is better because you are able to talk to people about your own age if you want to.

**Son 2:** Yes, it is better if you can talk over playing a game of pool where there is less attention given to the subject area of 'SEX'.

**Researcher:** So did the teachers give you this information?

**Son 2:** No, it was just given at the roadshow.

**Son 1:** Yes and you can also pick leaflets up from the youth club if you want them.

**Researcher:** Who has taught you the most about the SRE (i.e. mother, father, school, etc)?

**Both say 'School' and then laugh.**

**Researcher:** So who do you prefer to talk to about sex?

**Son 1:** The school because you are not singled out.

**Son 2:** Yes, and you don't have to answer questions if they are asked.

**Researcher:** So who initiated the conversation concerning sexual matters?

**Son 1:** Teacher.

**Researcher:** Was it embarrassing to discuss sexual matters?

**Son 2:** No, not discussing sex, it is just embarrassing talking to your parents or older people.

**Son 1:** No I don't get embarrassed either, except when people start probing into your personal life.

**Researcher:** What topics are embarrassing to talk about with people? (e.g. relationships)

**Son 2:** It is not the point of discussing the topic, it is more to who you talk to about sex.

**Son 1:** Yes, it isn't even embarrassing talking to females.

**Son 2:** Yes, well that's who has mainly taught us anyway.

**Son 1:** Yes, except that male biology teacher.

**Son 2:** Yes, but he was too embarrassed to teach you. It is important that people who teach the sex education are doing it because they want to not because they have to.

**Son 1:** Yes and he just made a joke of it to hide the embarrassment?

**Researcher:** Why do you think he was embarrassed talking about these topics?

**Son 1:** I don't know, but in my experience if someone is embarrassed talking about something they do it badly. So I think it was him who was more embarrassed than we were.

**Son 2:** Yes, that's probably true but he wasn't as young as the nurse who taught us, and she had the knowledge to answer any questions that were asked.

**Son 1:** Yes, I suppose.

**Researcher:** So at what age were you when you first started to learn about sexual matters?

**Son 1:** I don't know, probably about 11 from school.

**Researcher:** Have you parents talked to you about sexual matters before or after this age?

**Son 1:** No thankfully not.

**Son 2:** Aw that would be so bad. Mother talking about sex!

**Son 1:** Dad talking about sex!

**Researcher:** After discussions about sexual matters, were there still things you wanted to know more about?

**Son 1:** Not really, no.

**Son 2:** No, I think we also talk about things. I tell him a few things.

**Son 1:** No you don't, you just tell me the correct information rather than the slang terms.

**Son 2:** Yes okay, I suppose I do.

**Researcher:** Who would you like to teach you about sexual matters?

**Son 1:** Someone who is young, has the knowledge and is not embarrassed talking about sex.

**Son 2:** Yes, someone who is not going to make a joke of it, but someone who is working on our wave-length.

**Researcher:** Why, what is the reason for this?

**Son 1:** Just more open and possibly a bit more aware of how embarrassing it can be to talk about.

**Researcher:** Do you think that you pick things up from other people's conversations regarding SRE?

**Son 1:** I don't think you learn things from listening into people's conversations, but you do pick up words when you are younger and wonder what they mean.

**Son 2:** No comment.

**Researcher:** What sorts of sexual matters do you discuss with friends?

**Son 2:** You don't really discuss things with your friends.

**Son 1:** Well it depends if they are of the same-sex. I might discuss things with my girlfriend, but not with my mates.

**Researcher:** What makes you want to talk to your friends about sexual matters?

**Son 1:** Curiosity and that's all I would like to say.

**Researcher:** What aspects of SRE do you learn more about when talking to friends?

**Son 1:** This is really personal. I suppose more about what she is going through and to build-up a relationship, if you like her that is, and I can't say anymore.

**Researcher:** Which parent do you mainly talk to about sexual matters?

**Both sons' agree: Neither.**

**Son 1:** This is simply because they will ask more than you want to tell them.

**Son 2:** Plus they will probably walk away laughing, even if we were being serious.

**Researcher:** Who initiates the conversations regarding sexual matters?

**Son 1:** Father once tried and failed badly.

**Researcher:** What SRE topics have your parents discussed with you, and at what age did these conversations occur?

**Son 1:** Dad tried to discuss first sex education lesson with me and then I just realised the poor old man felt embarrassed, so I have never asked and my parents have never told, and it suits me fine.

**Son 2:** Me too, I don't want to talk to them about sex. They can't even get the terminology right.

**Researcher:** When and what circumstances are these conversations likely to occur?

**Son 1:** When I came home from school that once. Bad mistake!

**Researcher:** What topics do your parents NOT discuss with you concerning SRE?

**Both sons:** Everything! Laugh.



**Researcher:** Why do you think your parents omit these topics regarding sexual matters (i.e. embarrassment)?

**Son 2:** Yes, I think they are embarrassed.

**Son 1:** No, you mean they are an embarrassment when talking about sex. Don't get us wrong we love our parents but they do come across as rather out-dated.

**Son 2:** Yes, like something from the ice-age. Laughter.

**Son 1:** Sorry that is a family joke. We labelled dad as the mammoth off ice-age because he is starting to put on weight and he has too much hair on his head.

**Laughter.**

**Researcher:** Where do you think you will learn about sexual matters if your parents don't teach you?

**Both sons':** School.

**Researcher:** Do you think your parents have the most up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach you about sexual matters?

**Both sons:** No.

**Son 1:** I am sure my mum would be able to tell us what it is like to have a baby, but apart from that I don't think so.

**Son 2:** Yes, we could probably tell them more, but then they would probably still laugh.

**Researcher:** So do your parents laugh when the word sex is mentioned?

**Son 1:** Dad does and I think that is to do with our embarrassing scenario when I was 11; poor man, but mum just puts her head down and shuffles away.

**Researcher:** Are there any restrictions on not discussing sexual matters within the family amongst yourselves?

**Son 2:** No we just choose not to.

**Researcher:** Do you feel that your family talk openly about sexual matters within the family?

**Laughter, definitely not (both agree).**

**Researcher:** How do you think other families communicate SRE, compared to yours?

**Son 2:** Well, I am not sure. I know my friends do not talk to their parents.

**Son 1:** No, I don't think mine do either.

**Researcher:** Do you think in general more sex education is given to female children rather than male children?

**Son 1:** I don't know. I suppose they might because girls go through more than lads.

**Son 2:** Yes, but at school they don't get more sex education.

**Son 1:** That's not what she asked. She was on about within the family.

**Son 2:** Oh, sorry.

**Researcher:** At what age do you think your parents want you to know about sexual matters?

**Son 2:** I don't know.

**Son 1:** No, sorry can't answer that, I would just be guessing.

**Researcher:** Do you want to have a guess?

**Son 1:** Never! No sorry, they have just rarely talked to us about it, but probably at a time that the school approaches the subject.

**Researcher:** Do the school involve your parents in the SRE you receive?

**Son 2:** No, Thankfully not.

**Laughter.**

**Researcher:** Do you want your parents to have more involvement in the SRE you receive in school?

**Both sons:** No, it isn't necessary.

**Researcher:** If no, how do you think the school could improve their approach to involving parents more?

**Son 1:** No, and I don't think I would want them to.

**Son 2:** No, me neither.

**Researcher:** What main forms of the media (computers, magazines etc) do you use to learn about issues regarding SRE?

**Son 1:** Magazines, movies ...

**Son 2:** Yes, and Big Brother.

**Researcher:** What sorts of things do you learn from these sources that you do not get taught about elsewhere?

**Son 1:** How to do it, and how to present yourself when in different situations. Not in a seedy way, but just with how to or, how not to behave in certain situations.

**Son 2:** More like how not to be.

**Researcher:** Do you prefer to use these sources to learn about SRE?

**Son 1:** Partly, but it is important to know the facts as well.

**Son 2:** Yes, as most of the stuff you see is not how it is anyway (probably – laugh).

**Researcher:** What impact do you think the media (computers, magazines, etc) has regarding the SRE that you learn?

**Son 1:** Quite a bit in relation to stereotypes, but it just gives you sexual content from a different angle.

**Son 2:** Yes, you aren't Brad Pitt and (name of son 1's girlfriend) is not Angelina Jolie.

**Son 1:** Shut up small-fry.

**Laughter.**

**Researcher:** Do you think the media act as a deterrent when showing the consequences and negativity associated with some sexual behaviours/issues?

**Son 2:** Yes, but if someone shows sex stuff too early then they will just not have any of it.

**Son 1:** Yes, like us with the video at 11. Who wants to know about childbirth at that age?

**Researcher:** Do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing?

**Son 1:** I think it is a good thing if you have the correct knowledge and information.

**Son 2:** Yes it is just an add-on of the fact-based information, but you need to know how to view the media as well.

**Researcher:** Do you think the religious beliefs you have been brought up with influences the SRE you receive?

**Son 2:** I don't know.

**Son 1:** I know different believers such as Catholics and Muslims have different views point on what sex education they do not want to see be taught, but we don't have those beliefs because we are not religious.

**Son 2:** Mum and dad are, and that's why they don't talk about it.

**Son 1:** Yes, right.

**Researcher:** So can I ask if we look at the CD together and then I ask you some more questions.

Both sons' agree and choose the true and false section whereby they get 32/33, however the oldest brother lead his younger brother in some of the terminology. The following questions were then asked.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Son 2:** I think some of the questions should be worded a bit different because some of the answers are based on your own opinion of things. It is what you think as a person as to the answer you would give.

**Son 1:** Yes, such as the question about stress. If you don't get stressed as a person, then you are going to give a different answer to someone who does get stressed.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Son 2:** I thought the colours were good; very eye catching.

**Son 1:** I liked the way it was laid out because it was quite modern in appearance.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Son 1:** I found the fly to be annoying, especially the accent.

**Son 2:** Yes, and I think that awful noise when you got a question wrong was also annoying. What would have been better would have been is if they used a different sound for each different question.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Son 2:** Possibly 13.

**Son 1:** Yes, but also a bit older as well, but I think it depends on the person and their level of knowledge as to whether they would use the CD.

**Son 2:** Yes, and I think girls would use the CD a lot more than maybe boys.

**Researcher:** Was there any aspect of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Son 1:** Yes, all of it.

**Son 2:** Yes, I would feel so embarrassed even doing that section with my mum or dad here.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

Laughter. Both sons agree that 'yes' because they haven't discussed sexual matters open within the family.

**Researcher:** Would you prefer to talk to your parents rather than find out about SRE aspects by using the CD?

**Both sons:** No.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Son 2:** In some families.

**Son 1:** Yes, but not ours.

**Researcher:** After your parents have watched the CD do you feel they would be able to talk more openly with you about all aspects raised within the CD or is there things on the CD they will not be aware of as a parent?

**Son 2:** No.

**Son 1:** I hope not because I wouldn't want to talk to them about it.

**Researcher:** I think I know the answer to this question but, would you have been as open and honest if either, or both you parents had been present?

**Son 1:** I am not sure I would have been able to do it.

**Son 2:** No, me neither because everyone would have clammed up as we are not used to talking about sex together, as a family.

**Researcher:** Okay, well thank you for being so honest with me. I can assure you that anything you have said to me will not be repeated to your mother, but may I ask a favour? Would you look at the multimedia program again over the next week and then I can just gain clarity of your thoughts, if I come back say in a week from now?

**Both sons agreed.**

### **Interview with Mother (father absent)**

**Researcher:** What sex and relationship education (SRE) was taught to you as parents when you were younger?

**Mother:** We were told all about hamsters and that was it. We were drawn a picture of a hamster, a cage and a wheel and this is how it applies to humans. This was taught in 1966.

**Researcher:** Which of your parents taught you about sexual matters, and why do you think it was this parent?

**Mother:** Neither. The only thing I can remember is my mother showing me a chest where blankets were kept. She lifted the lid and said you are going to need these ... lifted up the blankets where these great big sanitary towels were and then shot out of the room and it was never discussed again. That was the sex education I was given from my parents.

**Researcher:** Did your own parents ever comment on the sex education that they received when they were younger?

**Mother:** No.

**Researcher:** With hindsight, do you think your parents had sufficient knowledge to teach you about sexual matters?

**Mother:** No. My mum gave me a book and I put it in my sock draw. I never ever looked it encase I creased it and then she would have known I would have looked at it.

**Researcher:** Do you feel your family talked openly about sexual matters when you were younger?

**Mother:** No, not ever.

**Researcher:** If no, why do you think sexual matters were not discussed more openly within your family when you were younger?

**Mother:** Embarrassment.

**Researcher:** Who taught the SRE? (i.e. mother, father, school etc)

**Mother:** Friends.

**Researcher:** At what age was SRE taught and what topics were discussed?

**Mother:** About 12 or 13 and the big topic was periods.

**Researcher:** How and in what context was SRE taught?

**Mother:** Just in the class room, but it was made more of a joke.

**Researcher:** Were there any aspects of SRE that you still wanted to know more about?

**Mother:** Looked back to the time, no, but when I was younger I thought I knew all that I needed to.

**Researcher:** With hindsight, do you think the topics associated with the SRE you were given were younger was accurate and correct?

**Mother:** No, because it was mainly talk from my friends that I learnt things.

**Researcher:** How did you find out SRE for yourself?

**Mother:** Listening and talking to my peers.

**Researcher:** Did you learn any SRE from listening to other people conversations?

**Mother:** Yes.

**Researcher:** What age do you think you were when you felt you had adequate knowledge of SRE topics?

**Mother:** To be honest after I had done it and when I had my first child I knew pretty much all of it then.

**Researcher:** With hindsight, do you think you knew enough sex education at your different developmental stages to prepare you for adult life?

**Mother:** No, but at the time I thought I did, even though I didn't.

**Researcher:** If you look back to the SRE that was taught when you were younger, how do you think it could have been improved to provide you with the information you wanted or needed at the time?

**Mother:** It would have been improved if it had existed.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the SRE that was taught, compared with today's teaching?

**Mother:** I think it is a lot better now because with me being a teacher I get to know more about what is being taught, so I know it has been improved greatly and I think it is a good thing because they need to know about it. More so in this day and age with there being so many more diseases being around, which there wasn't any in my day.

**Researcher:** How was sex discussed when you were younger and why do you think it was discussed in this way (i.e. embarrassment)?

**Mother:** Embarrassment.

**Researcher:** Do you as a parent feel you have the up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach your children about sexual matters?

**Mother:** Yes, I don't know what they said, but I think I do. I do talk to them about things, but it is them that do not want to talk to me because I think they get embarrassed.

**Researcher:** What sex and relationship education (SRE) has been taught to your children?

**Mother:** I have an idea of what they have been taught, but I don't know when it is getting delivered.

**Researcher:** What size of group was SRE taught in and was is it mixed or single-sex group?

**Mother:** I think mixed, but they have never said.

**Researcher:** Do you know if signposting was given to say where they could get further information or advice?

**Mother:** No.

**Researcher:** Who has taught SRE to your children (i.e. mother, father, school, etc)?

**Mother:** I think the school and their peers.

**Researcher:** Why do you think they prefer to learn about sexual matters from this person (Is it possible due to being the same sex?)?

**Mother:** I think they will get taught things at school, but I think they will discuss things more with their peers because that's what lads do and I think they make a joke of it so it isn't personalised towards them and therefore not as embarrassing.

**Researcher:** At what age was SRE taught to your child/ren and what topics were discussed?

**Mother:** At a time when they are going to understand the information being given.

**Researcher:** Who initiated the discussion of SRE?

**Mother:** They have probably asked things when they were younger, but I think because we are a fun family we make a joke of things, which might not always be a good thing. I do know though that they do not see sex as a fun thing and I know they have the correct information and values to behave in a correct way.

**Researcher:** Was it embarrassing for you as a parent to discuss sexual matters with your children?

**Mother:** Yes, to be honest with you.

**Researcher:** If yes, what topics were embarrassing to talk about (e.g. relationships)?

**Mother:** Everything from theirs and our point of view as parents.

**Researcher:** Why do you get embarrassed talking about these topics?

**Mother:** Because it was taught to me like that I think.

**Researcher:** After discussions, what aspects of SRE do you think your children still want to know more about?

**Mother:** I don't think they still want to know things and if they did they know I would talk to them, but they would feel more comfortable going on the Internet or reading a book.

**Researcher:** Who would you like to teach your children about sexual matters?

**Mother:** It is important to me that they get taught by the people they feel the most comfortable talking to about it.

**Researcher:** Why, and what is the reason for this?

**Mother:** Because I don't want them to be pushed into talking to me or their dad if they don't want to. I think that way they will not learn what they need or want to, so it is better if they steer themselves and come to us if they want to.

**Researcher:** What sorts of sexual matters do you think your children discuss with their friends?

**Mother:** Everything. I have heard them and there is no things that I haven't heard them discussing. I think the conversations are generated through things they have in common, such as what they watch on TV or what they see in the 'Nuts' magazine.

**Researcher:** Are these friends of the same or opposite sex?

**Mother:** Both.

**Researcher:** Why do you think your children want to talk to their friends about sexual matters?

**Mother:** They have more of a rapport with each other and they can relate to what each of them is saying. I don't know what it is like for a boy when growing-up so I could imagine they think I know nothing, so why bother asking.

**Researcher:** What aspects of SRE do you think they learn more about when talking to their friends?

**Mother:** One word – Reassurance! Laughs.

**Researcher:** Which parent mainly talks to their children about sexual matters?

**Mother:** Me, if either of us.

**Researcher:** Why is it this parent (i.e. factors)?

**Mother:** Because their father is never here. If he isn't working he is at the golf club or pub with his friends.

**Researcher:** Why do you think they prefer to talk to this parent about sexual matters (Is it possible due to being the same sex?)?

**Mother:** They don't, but if they did I would be honest and try to be open with them.

**Researcher:** Who initiates the conversations regarding sexual matters?

**Mother:** In the past, both, but more them now.

**Researcher:** What topics do parents discuss with their children, and at what age and is it different for sons and daughters?

**Mother:** Well, I can only really remember one thing which generated conversation and that was when they went up into secondary school. My eldest came home and was quite quiet, but we knew that he had had his first sex education lesson. I told my husband with him being of the same sex that it was his job, so anyway he went ask asked our son about school and he mentioned this video on sex. My husband had sort of asked what things were shown on the video and our son had said '*a penis, oh and boobs*'. My husband replied well you know what these are; you have seen me and your mum naked. The son replied '*yes well this woman on the video had proper boobs, not like mums*'. Well I was mortified, my husband laughed hysterically and our son's last words were '*giving birth is also disgusting and I do not want to have this conversation again*'. Since then we have respected his opinion and never questioned him in such a way.

**Researcher:** When and what circumstances are these conversations likely to occur?

**Mother:** They don't.

**Researcher:** What topics do parents NOT discuss with their children?

**Mother:** Everything that they do not want to talk to me about.

**Researcher:** Why do parents omit these topics regarding sexual matters (i.e. embarrassment)?

**Mother:** Embarrassment.

**Researcher:** Where do you think your children will learn about the sexual matters if you don't teach them?

**Mother:** School, peers and life experiences.

**Researcher:** Are there any restrictions on not discussing sexual matters within the family amongst yourselves?

**Mother:** No, they just choose not to discuss things with me.

**Researcher:** Do you feel that your family talk openly about sexual matters within the family?

**Mother:** No, but if my sons wanted to talk to me I would try and be very open.

**Researcher:** How do you think other families communicate SRE, compared to yours?

**Mother:** Well this is it. For all I don't think we talk openly, I think we would if my sons wanted to, but we live next door to what my kids call the '*sex lady*', she is a nurse and I know what hers and our kids talk about because they are very close and she tells them absolutely everything from masturbation to oral sex, which I have no problem my children knowing about, but she will talk to her kids about it when mine are there and I know my sons have asked her things, which I know I would get embarrassed about if I did talk to my sons about the things she has discussed with them.

**Researcher:** Do you think in general more sex education is given to female children rather than male children?

**Mother:** I don't know. I don't know what it would be like because I don't have a daughter.

**Researcher:** At what age do you want your children to know about sexual matters?

**Mother:** When they are ready, probably about 12 or 13 years old.

**Researcher:** Do the school involve parents in the educating of the children?

**Mother:** As much as I would want to be involved with sex education. It would be useful though to know what and when the sex education is being given. We have only ever known about our sons being shown the video.

**Researcher:** What main forms of the media (computers, magazines etc) do your children use to learn about issues regarding SRE?

**Mother:** All, and I mean all.

**Researcher:** What sorts of things do you think they learn from these sources that they do not get taught about elsewhere?

**Mother:** What sex feels like, how to keep safe, pretty much everything they need or want to know.

**Researcher:** Do you think they prefer to use these sources to learn about SRE?

**Mother:** Well they must because I don't think they use them to find out information, I think it is more to do with understanding what people experience when having a relationship and things like that.

**Researcher:** What impact do you think the media (computers, magazines, etc) have on adolescents regarding the SRE that they learn?

**Mother:** A large part. I think they get given the facts and then the media show the things that kids do not want to ask about. There is something's you will only find out about learning by yourself because that makes you the person you want to be.

**Researcher:** Do you think the media act as a deterrent when showing the consequences and negativity associated with some sexual behaviours/issues?

**Mother:** No, well yes, I am not quite sure really.

**Researcher:** Do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing?

**Mother:** I have reservations as a mother as to how much they put on the television, but I am a realistic in that if they want to watch some of those scenes they are going to anyway. On the other hand I think the media can be good in that it makes young people think and possibly ask or question more.

**Researcher:** Do you think the parents religion impacts on the SRE they give to their children?

**Mother:** No I don't, but if it does then I think that is wrong. The youth of today are not as interested in religion as people were when I was younger so it is unfair to make them be something just for the sake of parents' belief systems. They have to find out who they are as people. God, this is deep, sorry.

**The mother was then asked to explore the Sense CD. She chose the relationships section and the son and father in the car – How do I know when to have sex?**

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Mother:** With what I have seen it looks okay. I don't know if the section I saw was representative of fathers and their sons because I don't think that would happen between my sons and their father, but the idea is a nice one.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Mother:** I think the range of subjects is good, but I am not sure which one I like most yet.



**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Mother:** I can't comment without watching more of the CD.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Mother:** I think it might be too old for my eldest (16 years), but good for my youngest (14 years), even a little younger of about 12 years old.

**Researcher:** Was there any aspect of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Mother:** I haven't seen too much of it yet, but I think my sons would just laugh at the section I saw because they do get embarrassed when talking about sex with me and my husband.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Mother:** I can't comment on that yet, but I can imagine there would be quite a few.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Mother:** I think it is dependent upon the family.

**Researcher:** As a parent do you feel you could talk openly with your child about all aspects raised within the CD or is there things on the CD you were not aware of as a parent?

**Mother:** No, I think I am quite up to speed with the facts surrounding sex, but as I have said my sons don't talk to me about sexual matters.

**WENT BACK ONE WEEK LATER** and asked sons to complete the follow-up knowledge questionnaire before asking the following questions:

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Son 2:** It was alright.

**Son 1:** Yes, but we still didn't watch it as a family.

**Researcher:** Why not?

**Son 1:** Too embarrassing, sorry.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Son 2:** Well I thought the colours were good.

**Son 1:** Yes.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Son 2:** The '*True and False*' section because if you got the answer wrong it didn't tell you the correct answer.

**Son 1:** Well I like the sections, especially the virtual clinic because it gave factual information and advice.

**Son 2:** You would say that.

**Mother:** Now, now boys.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Son 1:** Younger than me.

**Son 2:** About 12 years old.

**Researcher:** Was there any aspect of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Both laugh.**

**Son 1:** We didn't watch it as a family.

**Son 2:** Yes, but we watched it together.

**Son 1:** Yes, but you also didn't want to watch it with mum there.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?  
All laugh.

**Son 1:** Lots, if not all.

**Researcher:** Would you prefer to talk to your parents rather than find out about SRE aspects by using the CD?

**Son 1:** CD.

**Son 2:** Yes, I would too.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Son 2:** In other families, yes.

**Son 1:** Yes, but just not in ours.

The sons left the room after being given a de-brief and thanked for their time. The mother was then asked to complete the follow-up knowledge questionnaire before asking the following questions in order to gain clarity as to if, and how the CD has broken down any barriers when discussing SRE within the family.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Mother:** I thought it had some valuable information.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Mother:** The variety of sections to choose.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Mother:** That '*True and False*' section. It was when you selected an answer it made that stupid noise before giving you the answer.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Mother:** I think 12 upwards.

**Researcher:** Was there any aspect of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Mother:** Yes, when I tried to be with them when you were watching it, they asked me to leave your room.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Mother:** Most, unfortunately.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Mother:** Not in mine because they won't talk to me, or their dad.

**Researcher:** As a parent do you feel you could talk openly with your child about all aspects raised within the CD or is there things on the CD you were not aware of as a parent?

**Mother:** I could, but they won't talk to me.

The mother was then given a de-brief about the study and thanked for her time.

**End of Interview.**

## 12<sup>th</sup> Family Interview - Stage II

**Participants:** Female parent (43 years) and daughter (13 years). Father and step-father absent.

**Consent form signed and retained by the family and researcher.**

**Researcher:** Thank you. I would also like to ask if it is possible for either one of you to leave the room so I could do the first interview?

Mother and daughter decided that the daughter should be interviewed first. The mother was then asked to take the demographics form and the sexual knowledge questionnaire and the researcher and her daughter went to another room in the house. The researcher then started the interview process by asking the daughter to herself complete the sexual knowledge questionnaire and then answer the following questions:

### Interview with Daughter

**Researcher:** What sex and relationship education (SRE) has been taught to adolescents?

**Daughter:** In year 6 we got taught some and in year 7 we did as well. Then we have just done some in year 8 as well.

**Researcher:** And what were the topics that you covered?

**Daughter:** How to keep safe on sex, what contraception to use and they just other things to do with growing-up and the changes that are going to happen, and just explained everything.

**Researcher:** What size of group is SRE taught in and is it mixed or single-sex?

**Daughter:** Well in year 6 it was boys and girls in a classroom of about 30 of us and then when we got the video in year 6 when we were separated then. In year 7 we got separated again, but in year 8 we were all taught together again.

**Researcher:** So what did the video cover in year 6?

**Daughter:** Mainly things to do with hygiene and puberty changes.

**Researcher:** Is this an ideal setting or would you prefer different sizes of groups and gender when being taught SRE?

**Daughter:** I don't really mind.

**Researcher:** Right, so was any signposting given to say where you get further information or advice?

**Daughter:** Well when the nurse came in at year 7 she was saying how you could get a C Card and gave us a card on where we could go for further information.

**Researcher:** Who has taught you the most about the SRE (i.e. mother, father, school, etc)?

**Daughter:** Probably my mum and school.

**Researcher:** So who initiated the conversation concerning sexual matters?

**Daughter:** It is probably my mum in the beginning but I also ask questions now so we talk a lot more.

**Researcher:** Was it embarrassing to discuss sexual matters?

**Daughter:** No, not really.

**Researcher:** What topics are embarrassing to talk about with people (e.g. relationships)?

**Daughter:** None.

**Researcher:** So at what age were you when you first started to learn about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** Not too young, but it would probably be about when I was 7 or 8 years old when my mum started talking to me.

**Researcher:** After discussions about sexual matters, were there still things you wanted to know more about?

**Daughter:** Sometimes, but then I would just ask the teacher or talk to my mum about it. There was also a group of us at school that went and ask the nurse about things that we didn't understand, but I can't remember what we were asking about, now.

**Researcher:** Who would you like to teach you about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** My mum and probably the school nurse.

**Researcher:** Why, what is the reason for this?

**Daughter:** I think my mum because she is close to me and I know I can trust her and then the school nurse because she probably knows more.

**Researcher:** Do you think that you pick things up from other people's conversations regarding SRE?

**Daughter:** Yes, probably I think I do.

**Researcher:** What sorts of sexual matters do you discuss with friends?

**Daughter:** Girly things mainly, such as periods and our own experiences.

**Researcher:** What makes you want to talk to your friends about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** Probably because we are all going through the same thing.

**Researcher:** What aspects of SRE do you learn more about when talking to friends?

**Daughter:** Just about what it is like for them.

**Researcher:** Which parent do you mainly talk to about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** My mum.

**Researcher:** Why is it this parent (i.e. factors)?

**Daughter:** Because I feel safer with my mum and I know she won't go and talk to other people.

**Researcher:** Why do you prefer to talk to this parent about sexual matters (Is it possible due to being the same sex)?

**Daughter:** I don't know really, but I don't think I would be able to talk to my dad like I talk to my mum.

**Researcher:** Who initiates the conversations regarding sexual matters?

**Daughter:** My mum will tend to ask me things.

**Researcher:** What SRE topics have your parents discussed with you, and at what age did these conversations occur?

**Daughter:** Well I talk about periods and just lots of personal stuff like that.

**Researcher:** What age would you say you first started talking to your mum about things?

**Daughter:** I remember talking about periods when I was about 7 or 8, but then we have just talked about other sexual topics since then.

**Researcher:** When and what circumstances are these conversations likely to occur?

**Daughter:** I am not sure but if I have a question I will just ask her then because I am not likely to forget. There is no certain time or place I don't think, but it is just when me and my mum are alone.

**Researcher:** What topics do your parents NOT discuss with you concerning SRE?

**Daughter:** I don't think there is any really.

**Researcher:** Where do you think you will learn about the sexual matters if your parent's don't teach you?

**Daughter:** Probably from the school nurse.

**Researcher:** Do you think your parent's have the most up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach you about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** No, probably not, but the school nurse has because she has been taught to do that and my mum hasn't.

**Researcher:** Are there any restrictions on not discussing sexual matters within the family amongst yourselves?

**Daughter:** Sometimes, if my baby brother and sister are around.

**Researcher:** How do you overcome these restrictions placed on the family when discussing sexual matters?

**Daughter:** I just try and remember the question for later.

**Researcher:** Do you feel that your family talk openly about sexual matters within the family?

**Daughter:** No not really, I think I would just talk to my mum really.

**Researcher:** How do you think other families communicate SRE, compared to yours?

**Daughter:** I think girls probably talk to their mum and boys will mostly talk to their dad really.

**Researcher:** Do you think in general more sex education is given to female children rather than male children?

**Daughter:** No, I think they get equal amounts.

**Researcher:** At what age do you think your parents want you to know about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** When I was about 8 really.

**Researcher:** Do the school involve your parents in the SRE you receive?

**Daughter:** I think in year 6 they had to fill out a slip to say that it was okay for me to watch a video, but now the school doesn't do that anymore.

**Researcher:** Do you want your parents to have more involvement in the SRE you receive in school?

**Daughter:** Yes, possibly. It would be good if she knew about the topics that we get taught.

**Researcher:** What main forms of the media (computers, magazines etc) do you use to learn about issues regarding SRE?

**Daughter:** Well probably at school we have used DVDs and videos, then at home I watch TV and then probably my friends and I will look at magazines such as '*Bliss*' or '*Sugar*'.

**Researcher:** What sorts of things do you learn from these sources that you do not get taught about elsewhere?

**Daughter:** It would say how to have safe sex and the contraception which is best and also about what people have experienced when having sex, just stuff like that really.

**Researcher:** So am I right in thinking that the media sources such as magazines give you more advice and information on things you are likely to experience?

**Daughter:** Yes, that is the sort of thing that they offer.

**Researcher:** Do you prefer to use these sources to learn about SRE?

**Daughter:** I don't really know. Probably a bit of everything really.

**Researcher:** What impact do you think the media (computers, magazines, etc) has regarding the SRE that you learn?

**Daughter:** I don't know.

**Researcher:** Do you think the media act as a deterrent when showing the consequences and negativity associated with some sexual behaviours/issues?

**Daughter:** Yes, especially with teenage pregnancy on Eastenders.

**Researcher:** Do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing?

**Daughter:** Probably a good thing, but I don't know why.

**Researcher:** Do you think the religious beliefs you have been brought up with influences the SRE you receive?

**Daughter:** No.

**Researcher:** Well thank you for your comments, but can I ask if we look at the CD together and then I ask you some more questions. The daughter chose to watch the 'Virtual Clinic' section of the CD.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Daughter:** It is okay.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Daughter:** I don't know at this stage, it is quite modern though.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Daughter:** I don't know.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Daughter:** From about 10 maybe.

**Researcher:** Are there any aspect of the CD that you feel uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Daughter:** No, not with my mum.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Daughter:** I don't know.

**Researcher:** Would you prefer to talk to your parents rather than find out about SRE aspects by using the CD?

**Daughter:** My mum, yes.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Daughter:** I don't know.

**Researcher:** After your parents have watched the CD do you feel they would be able to talk more openly with you about all aspects raised within the CD or is there things on the CD they will not be aware of as a parent?

**Daughter:** I don't know.

The daughter was asked to complete the post sexual knowledge questionnaire and her mother was asked the following questions.

### **Interview with Mother**

**Researcher:** What sex and relationship education (SRE) was taught to you as parents when you were younger?

**Mother:** A few lessons in my first year of senior school.

**Researcher:** So can I ask what these sessions covered?

**Mother:** Periods and pregnancy. Then a nurse came in and told us about contraception.

**Researcher:** Which of your parents taught you about sexual matters, and why do you think it was this parent?

**Mother:** My mum, I think.

**Researcher:** If the mother – why do you think fathers do not talk to their children about sex?

**Mother:** My father just never would and I think it was to do with the fact that he was embarrassed because it wasn't talked about then. I think the mother has always took that role, but I think things might be a bit different now in the fact that fathers do talk to their children a lot more, simply because sex is discussed more than it used to be.

**Researcher:** Did your own parents ever comment on the sex education that they received when they were younger?

**Mother:** No, I just remember my mum saying that her mum told her '*She had only done it a few times and hated it*'. **Laughter.** From my dad's side I just don't think my dad's family would have discussed it as a family.

**Researcher:** With hindsight, do you think your parents had sufficient knowledge to teach you about sexual matters?

**Mother:** I think my mum did, yes.

**Researcher:** Do you feel your family talked openly about sexual matters when you were younger?

**Mother:** No, not really.

**Researcher:** If no, why do you think sexual matters were not discussed more openly within your family when you were younger?

**Mother:** I don't know really. I think my dad would have been embarrassed, but I don't think my mother was. I just chose not to talk to her about it.

**Researcher:** Who taught you the most about SRE topics (i.e. mother, father, school etc)?

**Mother:** Just what I have picked up from friends and from what I had heard. My older cousins also told me things that I didn't know because they were much older than me.

**Researcher:** At what age was SRE taught and what topics were discussed?

**Mother:** Mainly in secondary school. Come to think about it I was told about periods when a friend asked the teacher what a period was. The teacher replied '*A length of time*'.

**Laughter.** But then we kept probing and she told us then. Oh and my mum bought me a little book on periods and that was about it really.

**Researcher:** How and in what context was SRE taught?

**Mother:** Just in the normal class room and by flicking through the book my mum bought me.

**Researcher:** Were there any aspects of SRE that you still wanted to know more about?

**Mother:** No.

**Researcher:** With hindsight, do you think the topics associated with the SRE you were given were younger was accurate and correct?

**Mother:** Yes, I think on the whole they were.

**Researcher:** How did you find out SRE for yourself?

**Mother:** I didn't really, I just heard about it from my peers and cousins.

**Researcher:** Did you learn any SRE from listening to other people conversations?

**Mother:** Yes.

**Researcher:** What age do you think you were when you felt you had adequate knowledge of SRE topics?

**Mother:** Probably about the age of 15 or 16.

**Researcher:** With hindsight, do you think you knew enough sex education at your different developmental stages to prepare you for adult life?

**Mother:** Yes, probably. If not off school then definitely from friends and cousins.

**Researcher:** If you look back to the SRE that was taught when you were younger, how do you think it could have been improved to provide you with the information you wanted or needed at the time?

**Mother:** I don't think it needed to be improved. I think I knew enough for me, but STIs were not talked about then. So I suppose at the time it didn't make any difference to me, but the biggest message was '*Not to get pregnant*'. That was everyone's biggest fear if having sex, not getting an STI.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the SRE that was taught, compared with today's teaching?

**Mother:** I think it is a lot better, especially with regards to covering relationships, but I don't agree with the school nurse being able to give or help my daughter to get the morning after pill, not without me being told. I think I should know. I agree with nurses being there to offer advice and give young people knowledge to make choices, it is that I have heard that school nurses can help young people even get abortions and I just think that is disgraceful. That is taking it out of the hands of the parents and I agree with them being told about gay people, but I don't agree with them being told about oral sex. I think that is something that is personal between you and your partner and it shouldn't be taught in a way that it is seen okay to do in a casual relationship. Saying that I don't know what is actually taught because the school don't tell you, but I am think of the worst case scenario and I think if I knew more about how it is taught then I may not feel so strongly against it. I am working off the questions my daughter asks me and what her friends discuss when I have overheard them talking.

**Researcher:** So overall you think that some of the sex education is good when being taught to your daughter, but you do have reservations over how much if told?

**Mother:** Yes, I mean I think that when she has brought home work sheets it gives the basics of what they need know. I don't think though that you can learn about everything in the traditional school way. There are some things that you only find out from being in a relationship and if they are given too many set ideas then it might not be what they are expecting or it might not live up to their expectations when entering a relationship. You do need to find some things out for yourself.

**Researcher:** How was sex discussed when you were younger and why do you think it was discussed in this way (i.e. embarrassment)?

**Mother:** I think it was quite embarrassing for many people, which prevented it from being discussed.

**Researcher:** Do you as a parent feel you have the up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach your child about sexual matters?

**Mother:** I don't know. I think I have enough to be able to tell her about most things, or the things that she needs to know.

**Researcher:** What sex and relationship education (SRE) has been taught to your child?



**Mother:** I think puberty, periods, contraception, STIs, but I am not sure what else they have covered or how they teach about relationships.

**Researcher:** What size of group was SRE taught in and was is it mixed or single-sex group?

**Mother:** I think it is mixed and I think that is good because they get to see it from a male and female point of view.

**Researcher:** Do you know if signposting was given to say where they could get further information or advice?

**Mother:** No, I don't know.

**Researcher:** Who has taught SRE to your children (i.e. mother, father, school, etc)?

**Mother:** Probably myself.

**Researcher:** Why do you think they prefer to learn about sexual matters from this person (Is it possible due to being the same sex?)?

**Mother:** Myself, because I think it is one-to-one and I think sometimes in a large group when there is lots going on she might miss something.

**Researcher:** At what age was SRE taught to your child and what topics were discussed?

**Mother:** Probably about 8 or 9 and it has just continued since. She may have asked things earlier than that but I can't remember.

**Researcher:** Who initiated the discussion of SRE?

**Mother:** Probably both, but mainly me.

**Researcher:** Was it embarrassing for you as a parent to discuss sexual matters with your child?

**Mother:** No. I think she was embarrassed the other night when my husband and I were sat her when she was watching '*Big Brother*' and she asked what is circumcision? Is it when you have your balls chopped-off? Well my husband sunk into his seat and I had to tell her what it actually was. I think he may have told her if her friends were not here, it was just that he didn't know what to say in front of someone else's children.

**Researcher:** After discussions, what aspects of SRE do you think your child still wanted to know more about?

**Mother:** Possibly. There might be things she would be embarrassed to ask such as what is it like? I suppose the last thing you want to do is ask about you mum and dad's sex life and so I think she may get embarrassed there; probably with the thought that we may still make-love. **Laughter.**

**Researcher:** Who would you like to teach your children about sexual matters?

**Mother:** Me.

**Researcher:** Why, and what is the reason for this?

**Mother:** To make sure she gets the right information and understands what I am telling her.

**Researcher:** What sorts of sexual matters do you think your child discusses with her friends?

**Mother:** Probably wondering what sex is like and just about boys in general. I don't think it will be too deep, it is probably just at the having a laugh stage. I mean she has had one boyfriend a short while ago and when I asked if she kiss him, her reply was '*Oh, no your kidding*'. So I know it is still at that level and not involving sexual intercourse. She sees boys as just mates at the moment.

**Researcher:** Are these friends of the same or opposite sex?

**Mother:** Mixed.

**Researcher:** Why do you think your child wants to talk to their friends about sexual matters?

**Mother:** Just to get more of an idea about what it is all about really.

**Researcher:** What aspects of SRE do you think she will learn more about when talking to her friends?

**Mother:** Not a lot. I don't think they are having deep, meaning discussions at the moment, it is mainly me she has those with.

**Researcher:** So can I ask why you think it is that she talks to you and not your husband?

**Mother:** Well you see, my husband is not her real dad. I don't think that is why he gets embarrassed when discussing sexual matters with her, but I think he has fallen into the traditional role, and I have said to him are you going to talk to our son? You see, we have a son and another daughter who are both only babies, but he has said that he probably will do most of the talking with our son. I also think he will talk to the youngest children more because he will have been there as they grow-up, which he hasn't been with our eldest daughter.

**Researcher:** Which parent mainly talks to their children about sexual matters?

**Mother:** Me. **Laughter.**

**Researcher:** Why is it this parent (i.e. factors)?

**Mother:** I think it is because I am more equipped to answer the questions she asks, especially with us both being females. I mean my husband wouldn't know what a period feels like or what it is like to actually give birth, so I think I can supply her with advice and knowledge in the ways a man wouldn't be able to. I think also with me being at home all the time, I do spend more time with the children so I am going to educate them when things come-up or when they happen, so I am sure that is why I teach our children the most as well. I know she can ask my husband anything and I think she would ask most things, but I think given the choice she would come to me first. I also know he would be able to answer most questions, and would do when asked, but I suppose I volunteer the information sometimes rather than her having to ask.

**Researcher:** Why do you think they prefer to talk to this parent about sexual matters (Is it possible due to being the same sex?)?

**Mother:** For the same reasons as the last question.

**Researcher:** Who initiates the conversations regarding sexual matters?

**Mother:** Both.

**Researcher:** What topics do parents discuss with their children, and at what age and is it different for sons and daughters?

**Mother:** I think I have discussed pretty much everything. The only thing I haven't discussed with her is my sex life.

**Researcher:** When and what circumstances are these conversations likely to occur?

**Mother:** Probably when watching TV or whilst making meals in the kitchen. Our kitchen is a family room that we use often. But I think we would talk anytime as well.

**Researcher:** What topics do parents NOT discuss with their children?

**Mother:** My sex life.

**Researcher:** Why do parents omit these topics regarding sexual matters (i.e. embarrassment?)?

**Mother:** It's very personal and private and shouldn't be discussed.

**Researcher:** Where do you think your child will learn about the sexual matters if you don't teach them?

**Mother:** Probably school I would imagine.

**Researcher:** Are there any restrictions on not discussing sexual matters within the family amongst yourselves?

**Mother:** When the kids are around because it is just mad.

**Researcher:** How do you overcome these restrictions placed on the family when discussing sexual matters?

**Mother:** Just wait until they go to bed, or when we are alone.

**Researcher:** Do you feel that your family talk openly about sexual matters within the family?

**Mother:** We don't sit down and talk about it in a formal way, but if things are asked or if they come up then we will discuss them and I think we are quite open in that way. I mean, if something comes on the TV and she asks something my husband will make a joke of it and we will discuss it then, but we don't sit and talk about sex.

**Researcher:** How do you think other families communicate SRE, compared to yours?

**Mother:** I would say the majority of the people I know are open about sex and talk about it when necessary and needed.

**Researcher:** Do you think in general more sex education is given to female children rather than male children?

**Mother:** No, not really. I think sex education is given the same for both.

**Researcher:** At what age do you want your children to know about sexual matters?

**Mother:** By about the age of 10 really so they are prepared for what is going to happen to them. But if they asked earlier then I think they should be told. I mean she has always loved watching animal programmes and when she asks about puppies, or kittens or any other animal you can't do anything but given them the correct information that they have asked about. I mean at 5 years old I wouldn't explain things like I would now, but I would do it in a way that she gets the facts, but make sure I give them at a level she is going to understand.

**Researcher:** Do the school involve parents in the educating of the children?

**Mother:** No, I don't. You just get told they are going to do it.

**Researcher:** If no, how do you think the school could improve their approach to involving parents more?

**Mother:** Well, one big improvement would be to let us know what they are teaching our children and when they are discussing sexual matters with them. I think this way parents would be a lot more reassured and will be prepared to discuss things with their children.

**Researcher:** What main forms of the media (computers, magazines etc) do your child/ren use to learn about issues regarding SRE?

**Mother:** Television, Miss Teenage magazine things that she was reading from about 10 years old?

**Researcher:** What sorts of things do you think they learn from these sources that they do not get taught about elsewhere?

**Mother:** Most things I should imagine because the magazines cover so much. Even TV and Big Brother which I know everyone watches. I mean that is just a '*free-for-all*' that shows no morals what-so-ever. So yes, I think they see so much of it, everywhere they turn. I think the messages that come up is that it is okay to have sex when you want and

little deterrent is shown to young people which is why I think there is a lot more young mums. Pretty much everything comes across as acceptable. I mean on TV the other night a 'Rainbow Party' was mentioned as I thought what is that? I kept watching the TV and basically it was a competition to see which lad at this party could be given the most oral sex, which I just thought was disgusting. I mean I go to bed most nights before 10:30pm so it would have been on before then, I think on channel 4. I just thought what are young people learning from this?

**Researcher:** Do you think they prefer to use these sources to learn about SRE?

**Mother:** Probably.

**Researcher:** What impact do you think the media (computers, magazines, etc) have on adolescents regarding the SRE that they learn?

**Mother:** A lot because it is everywhere they look.

**Researcher:** Do you think the media act as a deterrent when showing the consequences and negativity associated with some sexual behaviours/issues?

**M other:** Sometimes, but they also glorify negative aspects to do with sex.

**Researcher:** Do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing?

**Mother:** I think it can be a good thing because it generates conversation, but sometimes I think it is responsible for putting a lot of pressure on young people to behave in a certain way.

**Researcher:** Do you think that parent's religion impacts on the SRE they give to their children?

**Mother:** Yes, possibly. Particularly if you are Catholic. I think some people are just so driven by their religion and I can't relate to them sometimes.

Brilliant, thank you very much for your views and comments. Can I now ask if you would look at the CD together and then I ask you some more questions. The mother chose the '*Information and Advice*' section of the CD.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Mother:** Seemed good with providing information to young people.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Mother:** I couldn't say without watching the other sections.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Mother:** Pass.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Mother:** Maybe about 14 for the bit that I have seen.

**Researcher:** Are there any aspect of the CD that you would feel uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Mother:** I don't think so looking at the titles. I think we have covered pretty much all of them.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Mother:** Pass.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Mother:** I think every family finds there own way of discussing sexual matters, but if young people prefer to use computers this CD maybe helpful.

**Researcher:** As a parent do you feel you could talk openly with your child about all aspects raised within the CD or is there things on the CD you were not aware of as a parent?

**Mother:** Pass.

**WENT BACK ONE WEEK LATER** and asked the mother and daughter to complete the follow-up sexual knowledge questionnaire. The mother and daughter then chose to answer the following questions together to identify if the multimedia program had broken down any barriers when discussing SRE within the family.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Mother:** I thought it was quite good. What did you think?

**Daughter:** I think it was good, especially for schools.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Mother:** I think the section that covered the male and female bodies was good because you had forgotten what fallopian tubes were, didn't you?

**Daughter:** Yes, but then it was good because we went to the '*Buzzwords*' and it told you more then.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Mother:** I think it was hard to try and get back to the different sections. If you clicked onto a section and then realised that we didn't want to watch it you almost had to go through the section you had chosen before being able to look at other sections, but I am not totally computer literate.

**Daughter:** Yes, that's why we watched the bedroom situation about 5 times. This just happened in the puberty part though, the rest were fine.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Mother:** I think about 14 years for some of the sections.

**Daughter:** Yes, but then younger for other sections such as the body parts and puberty because we have already been told so much about that from years ago.

**Mother:** Yes, but I think the section and scenarios on relationships needs to be for older adolescents when they are in relationship. I mean we had a laugh at that but if this was used in schools I think some of the sections would be inappropriate for young people below the age of 14 or 15. I think also the aspects on abortion need to be taught far later say 15 or 16 years of age.

**Researcher:** Was there any aspect of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

Both agreed by answering '*NO*'.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Mother:** Yes, quite a few just because of her age. That isn't to say we won't discuss them when the topic arises or when she wants to know something. I would be comfortable telling her things, but at the right time.

**Researcher:** Would you prefer to talk to your parents rather than find out about SRE aspects by using the CD?

**Daughter:** I would always want to talk to my mum, but I think the CD was really good and I suppose I would find it useful to learn from that also.

**Mother:** Would you have preferred to have watched that by yourself this week and then just ask me questions if you were unsure about something?

**Daughter:** No, because I could have done that last week before we watched the CD together. I had already seen the CD before we watched it.

**Mother:** Oh yes, you did say you had already looked at it previously before the other night.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Mother:** With some families yes, possibly.

**Daughter:** I don't know really, I suppose so.

**Researcher:** As a parent do you feel you could talk openly with your child about all aspects raised within the CD or is there things on the CD you were not aware of as a parent?

**Mother:** No, I don't really think so.

**Daughter:** No I wouldn't say so.

**Researcher:** So can I just ask whether you (the daughter) would have answered the questions any differently at the initial interview if you mother had been present?

**Daughter:** Not sure really.

**Mother:** Probably not because she would not get a word in edge ways for me talking.

**Both laugh.**

The mother and daughter were given a de-brief of the study and thanked for their time.

**End of Interview**

## 13<sup>th</sup> Family Interview - Stage II

**Participants:** Female parent (44 years), father (38) and son (13 years).

**Consent form signed and retained by the family and researcher.**

**Researcher:** Thank you. I would also like to ask if it is possible for either one of you to leave the room so I could do the first interview.

Mother, father and son decided that the son should be interviewed first. The mother and father were then asked to complete the demographics form and the sexual knowledge questionnaire and the researcher and their son went to another room in the house. The son then also completed the demographics form and the sexual knowledge questionnaire. The researcher then started the interview process by asking the son the following questions:

### Interview with Son

**Researcher:** What sex and relationship education (SRE) has been taught to adolescents?

**Son:** In primary school we learnt about sex and what it was and also about things to do with puberty.

**Researcher:** Great, so what have you been taught at secondary level?

**Son:** About puberty more, and more about what sex is. A couple of weeks ago we also had a roadshow which covered contraception, STIs and relationships.

**Researcher:** What size of group has the SRE taught in and is it mixed or single-sex?

**Son:** It was mixed.

**Researcher:** Is this an ideal setting or would you prefer different sizes of groups and gender when being taught SRE? If different, how?

**Son:** I don't mind.

**Researcher:** Yes, so was any signposting given to say where you get further information or advice?

**Son:** Yes, at the roadshow they gave us numbers we could phone and websites that we could go onto.

**Researcher:** Who has taught you the most about the SRE? (i.e. mother, father, school, etc)

**Son:** Probably my friends.

**Researcher:** So who do you prefer to talk to about sex?

**Son:** My friends.

**Researcher:** Okay. Before you went to primary school and had the formal sex education, had your mum or dad talked to you about sexual matters?

**Son:** No.

**Researcher:** So who initiated the conversation concerning sexual matters?

**Son:** My friends and I both talk about things together. I may mention things but so may they?

**Researcher:** Okay, so do you find it embarrassing to discuss sexual matters?

**Son:** What with my friends or parents?

**Researcher:** Either.

**Son:** No, I don't think so.

**Researcher:** So would you say you have ever asked your parents things about sexual matters?

**Son:** I can't remember asking them things.

**Researcher:** So if you were to talk to your parents about sexual matters, which parent would it most likely be that you would go and talk to?

**Son:** Probably my mum.

**Researcher:** Why is that would you say?

**Son:** Probably because I am closer to my mum.

**Researcher:** So at what age were you when you first started to learn about sexual matters?

**Son:** In the last year of primary school I think.

**Researcher:** Have you parents talked to you about sexual matters before or after this age?

**Son:** Not that I can remember.

**Researcher:** After discussions about sexual matters, were there still things you wanted to know more about?

**Son:** No, I don't think so.

**Researcher:** Who would you like to teach you about sexual matters?

**Son:** Probably people from the roadshow.

**Researcher:** Why, what is the reason for this?

**Son:** Because you can ask questions and know you are not going to see them again, not that it is embarrassing, it is just it is better because they know what they are talking about and are open when talking about things.

**Researcher:** So would you say they are more open than teachers or parents?

**Son:** Yes. They also just give you the facts and leave it at that.

**Researcher:** Do you think that you pick things up from other people's conversations regarding SRE?

**Son:** A bit of information, but not much.

**Researcher:** What sorts of sexual matters do you discuss with friends?

**Son:** Not about sex education, but cars and things. We also talk about how we are changing, but that's about it really. We sometimes have a laugh about things too.

**Researcher:** What makes you want to talk to your friends about sexual matters?

**Son:** Probably because I can trust them more and it is not as embarrassing as it would be talking to an adult?

**Researcher:** What aspects of SRE do you learn more about when talking to friends?

**Son:** I don't suppose I learn from them, but I suppose you feel safe because they are going through the same things with being the same age.

**Researcher:** Are there things that you would discuss with your friends that you would not discuss with your parents?

**Son:** Yes.

**Researcher:** If yes, why and what sexual matters would these be?

**Son:** Sex and more about it.

**Researcher:** Which parent do you mainly talk to about sexual matters?

**Son:** I don't think I have really talked to either parent much, but if I have it would be my mum.

**Researcher:** Why is it this parent (i.e. factors)?

**Son:** Feel closer to her.



**Researcher:** Would you prefer to discuss sexual matters with your other parent instead or as well?

**Son:** Well I suppose I do talk to my dad as well, but I think I just talk more to my mum because she is always around and does not work.

**Researcher:** Who initiates the conversations regarding sexual matters?

**Son:** I ask questions and she answers.

**Researcher:** What SRE topics have your parents discuss with you, and at what age did these conversations occur?

**Son:** She hasn't brought things up with me.

**Researcher:** When and what circumstances are these conversations likely to occur?

**Son:** Mainly these conversations have taken place in my teenage years and not when I was younger, but I would say I mainly talk to her when she is in bed and I go to say good-night.

**Researcher:** Brilliant so what topics do your parents NOT discuss with you concerning SRE?

**Son:** I don't know really.

**Researcher:** Where do you think you will learn about the sexual matters if your parent's don't teach you?

**Son:** My friends probably.

**Researcher:** Do you think your parent's have the most up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach you about sexual matters?

**Son:** Yes, because they have already been through it.

**Researcher:** Are there any restrictions on not discussing sexual matters within the family amongst yourselves?

**Son:** Yes when my younger brother is in the house.

**Researcher:** How do you overcome these restrictions placed on the family when discussing sexual matters?

**Son:** Just talk to her when she has gone to bed, and he is in bed.

**Researcher:** Do you feel that your family talk openly about sexual matters within the family?

**Son:** Sometimes yes, but not very often.

**Researcher:** How do you think other families communicate SRE, compared to yours?

**Son:** Some families are, but when I go to my friends houses they don't talk to their parents about it either.

**Researcher:** Do you think in general more sex education is given to female children rather than male children?

**Son:** No, I think we get taught the same.

**Researcher:** At what age do you think your parents want you to know about sexual matters?

**Son:** I don't know, but when I got a letter sent home in primary school they were okay about it.

**Researcher:** Do the school involve your parents in the SRE you receive?

**Son:** In primary school I think they did by sending a letter home, but in secondary school we just get taught it and they don't know about it.

**Researcher:** Do you want your parents to have more involvement in the SRE you receive in school?

**Son:** Yes. I think if they knew what I was told they might talk to me more about it.

**Researcher:** If no, how do you think the school could improve their approach to involving parents more?

**Son:** Just by sending letters home.

**Researcher:** Would you have been as open answering these questions if your parents had been present?

**Son:** I don't know because I do talk to them about sex, but I am not sure if I would have said as much if they were sat here.

**Researcher:** What impact do you think the media (computers, magazines, etc) has regarding the SRE that you learn?

**Son:** Quite a big impact over what I learn.

**Researcher:** Do you think the media act as a deterrent when showing the consequences and negativity associated with some sexual behaviours/issues?

**Son:** Yes, because it shows girls getting pregnant then having an abortion and how this can ruin your life.

**Researcher:** Do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing?

**Son:** A good thing because it gets information through to you quicker.

**Researcher:** Do you think the religious beliefs you have been brought up with influences the SRE you receive?

**Son:** No, not really.

**Researcher:** So can I ask if we look at the CD together and then I ask you some more questions.

**Son:** Do you mind if I watch it with my mum and dad here?

**Researcher:** Would you feel happier?

**Son:** Yes.

It was agreed that the family should watch the CD as a family because of the son feeling shy.

### **Questions for Parents**

**Researcher:** What sex and relationship education (SRE) was taught to you as parents when you were younger?

**Mother:** Can't remember any sex education being given.

**Father:** I remember being told about sex in biology but that is all. There was nothing at primary level.

**Mother:** Which of your parents taught you about sexual matters, and why do you think it was this parent?

**Father:** I don't think my mum and dad did. I just learn from school, friends and magazines.

**Researcher:** You didn't tell me you have looked at magazines.

Both laugh.

**Mother:** Well I didn't learn anything to do with sex from my mum or dad. We never talked about it. It was mainly my older sister who told me about things.

**Researcher:** Did your own parents ever comment on the sex education that they received when they were younger?

**Father:** No.

**Mother:** Well when I told my mum what we were doing tonight she had mentioned that she didn't have any sex education when she was younger.

**Researcher:** With hindsight, do you think your parents had sufficient knowledge to teach you about sexual matters?

**Mother:** No, I don't think they did. Did your mum and dad?

**Father:** I think they had the knowledge, but we just never talked about it.

**Researcher:** Do you feel your family talked openly about sexual matters when you were younger?

**Mother:** I think we do with our oldest son, even though it was never discussed when I was younger within the family then.

**Father:** Yes, I think we are quite open.

**Researcher:** If no, why do you think sexual matters were not discussed more openly within your family when you were younger?

**Mother:** I think just embarrassment.

**Father:** Yes, but also it was never as open as it is now, even on the television.

**Mother:** Aw yes (laughs). Even if something comes on the television about sex, my mother would turn it over.

**Researcher:** Who taught the SRE (i.e. mother, father, school, etc)?

**Mother:** I would mainly say my sister and friends.

**Father:** Yes, mainly friends and the basics from school.

**Researcher:** At what age was SRE taught and what topics were discussed?

**Father:** At about thirteen we just got told the basics about what sex was.

**Mother:** Yes, I suppose it would have been at secondary school, but I got told quite a bit before then off my older sister.

**Researcher:** How and in what context was SRE taught?

**Father:** Just in biology at school. It was just taught in the same way as any other subject.

**Mother:** I can't remember too much, but it would have just been at school.

**Researcher:** Were there any aspects of SRE that you still wanted to know more about?

**Mother:** No, and if there were I would have asked my sister.

**Father:** I think with it being so basic you did want to know more but you would just find out more off friends.

**Researcher:** With hindsight, do you think the topics associated with the SRE you were given were younger was accurate and correct?

**Mother:** Yes, I think so.

**Father:** Yes, pretty much.

**Researcher:** How did you find out SRE for yourself?

**Mother:** I mainly found out from my older sister and from my friends.

**Father:** Probably just from friends and what you hear.

**Researcher:** Did you learn any SRE from listening to other people conversations?

**Mother:** Definitely, especially from your friends.

**Father:** Yes, you do pick a lot up from them.

**Researcher:** What age do you think you were when you felt you had adequate knowledge of SRE topics?

**Mother:** Well I don't think I know it all now, but I had a good idea when I was about 15 from what my sister had told me.

**Father:** Yes, I would probably have been about that age too.

**Researcher:** With hindsight, do you think you knew enough sex education at your different developmental stages to prepare you for adult life?

**Mother:** Yes, I think I knew pretty much what I needed to.

**Father:** Yes, I do as well even though the education wasn't good at school, you pick a lot of things up as you are growing up.

**Researcher:** If you look back to the SRE that was taught when you were younger, how do you think it could have been improved to provide you with the information you wanted or needed at the time?

**Mother:** Well, it can't of been that dynamic because I don't remember been told much at school.

**Father:** No, it was just basic stuff in biology. It was nothing like what is taught today.

**Researcher:** Would you have preferred for SRE matters to have been discussed more openly within the family when you were younger?

**Mother:** Yes definitely, especially with my mum.

**Father:** Yes, it would have been better and would maybe have learnt more at a younger age, rather from school or friends.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the SRE that was taught, compared with today's teaching?

**Father:** Far better in that they cover pregnancy and contraception.

**Mother:** Yes, and I think it is much better in that they also cover diseases, which they never told us about when we were younger and also relationships, which are important.

**Researcher:** How was sex discussed when you were younger and why do you think it was discussed in this way (i.e. embarrassment?)?

**Mother:** I think it was just so embarrassing for people to talk about.

**Father:** Yes, but these days it isn't like that, especially when it is on the television.

**Mother:** Yes, I think we see things a lot more these days so it makes it easier to discuss.

**Researcher:** Do you as a parent feel you have the up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach your child about sexual matters?

**Mother:** Yes, I think so between us both.

**Father:** Yes, I think we do.

**Researcher:** What sex and relationship education (SRE) has been taught to your child?

**Father:** That is the one thing we are not sure of. We know what he had a primary school, but it would be nice to know what he is being taught now and what they are going to cover.

**Mother:** I know they covered periods and I remember him drawing sperms and things like that, but I really don't know what he has and has not covered since going to secondary school.

**Researcher:** What size of group was SRE taught in and was is it mixed or single-sex group?

**Mother:** Haven't got a clue.

**Father:** I really don't know.

**Researcher:** Do you know if signposting was given to say where they could get further information or advice?

**Mother:** No, I don't.

**Father:** No.

**Researcher:** Who has taught SRE to your child (i.e. mother, father, school, etc)?

**Father:** Mainly school.

**Mother:** Yes, I think they learn a lot from school, but I think kids learn a lot from each other. I know you went to do an interview with my friend last week and her daughter and our son have been discussing what she learnt from the CD. So I do know that they talk amongst themselves.

**Researcher:** Why do you think they prefer to learn about sexual matters from this person (Is it possible due to being the same sex?)?

**Mother:** I don't think he (the son) prefers to talk to any particular person about sex. If he wanted to know something he would just ask.

**Father:** Yes, he isn't bothered. I think he prefers to get as many people's opinions as possible to find out the information he wants to know about.

**Mother:** He would even ask his grandma if he wanted to know something. Even though she would be horrified, he would still ask.

**Researcher:** At what age was SRE taught to your children and what topics were discussed?

**Father:** I would say about the age of 10 or 11 when he got the letter sent home from school.

**Mother:** Yes, it would be about that time when he was given the slide shows and videos at school. They split the boys and the girls and talked to them about periods and puberty changes. He told us a bit about what he had learnt and showed us pictures he had drawn, such as the sperm, which was really good. We talked about it then, but mainly based on what he wanted to know at the time.

**Researcher:** Who initiated the discussion of SRE?

**Mother:** Both.

**Researcher:** Was it embarrassing for you as a parent to discuss sexual matters with your child?

**Mother:** I am not embarrassed. Are you (the father)?

**Father:** No, not at all.

**Researcher:** After discussions, what aspects of SRE do you think your child still wanted to know more about?

**Mother:** There are not any because he would continue to ask until he knew what he wanted to know.

**Father:** Yes, he would also go on the Internet as well to find out things.

**Researcher:** Who would you like to teach your child about sexual matters?

**Mother:** The school.

**Father:** The school and then us just to top up his knowledge.

**Mother:** Yes.

**Researcher:** Why and what is the reason for this?

**Father:** Just because of the school environment in that sex is part of being educated, but then us just so we know he understands what he has been taught.

**Researcher:** What sorts of sexual matters do you think your child discusses with his friends?

**Father:** Probably anything.

**Mother:** I think they will also discuss things they will have seen on the television as well.

**Researcher:** Are these friends of the same or opposite sex?

**Mother:** Both.

**Researcher:** Why do you think your child wants to talk to their friends about sexual matters?

**Mother:** I think they are just more comfortable talking to people their own age.

**Father:** Yes, and because they will relate to things better because they are all roughly going through the same things.

**Researcher:** What aspects of SRE do you think they learn more about when talking to their friends?

**Mother:** Just what each of them are going through really.

**Father:** Yes.

**Researcher:** Do you think your child will discuss some sexual matters with his friends that he would not talk to you about?

**Mother:** Yes, definitely and they will probably laugh a lot about it too.

**Father:** Yes, I think boys do that though.

**Researcher:** If yes, why and what sorts of things do you think they discuss?

**Mother:** Probably their experiences.

**Father:** Yes, and girls.

**Researcher:** Which parent mainly talks to their children about sexual matters?

**Mother:** I would say school and you (the father).

**Father:** Well I think he has learnt a lot from the television. He will then ask things.

**Mother:** Yes, but I don't think we have ever sat him down and talked to him about sex, but if he want to know something I would say he talks to his dad about it. At the same time though if he had a problem or wanted to know something he would come to me; he isn't shy about anything.

**Researcher:** Why is it this parent (i.e. factors)?

**Father:** I think it is who is around at the time when he wants to know something. I don't know if he has a preference.

**Mother:** Yes, I think he knows he can talk to us both about anything.

**Researcher:** Why do you think he prefers to talk to this parent about sexual matters (Is it possible due to being the same sex)?

**Researcher:** Who initiates the conversations regarding sexual matters?

**Father:** I would say both, but him, more than us I think.

**Mother:** Yes, it is normally if he has heard something that he doesn't understand. Then he will just blurt it out and then we will talk about it more deeply until he does understand.

**Researcher:** What topics do parents discuss with their children, and at what age and is it different for sons and daughters?

**Mother:** I think we would talk about anything that he asked really. I think people want to know things at different stages in their lives and our son wanted to know things at about 10 or 11 because that is when he asked about things. I think it will be different with our baby girl, because I would be wanting her to know about things sooner and therefore I think I will be different with her and at the age I tell her things.

**Researcher:** When and what circumstances are these conversations likely to occur?

**Mother:** Just anytime really.

**Mother:** If he wants to know something, he will just ask.

**Researcher:** What topics do parents NOT discuss with their children?

**Mother:** There aren't any, is there?

**Father:** I wouldn't say so, no.

**Researcher:** Where do you think your child will learn about the sexual matters if you don't teach them?

**Mother:** School.

**Researcher:** Are there any restrictions on not discussing sexual matters within the family amongst yourselves?

**Mother:** No.

**Father:** No, I wouldn't say there were.

**Researcher:** Do you feel that your family talk openly about sexual matters within the family?

**Father:** Yes.

**Researcher:** How do you think other families communicate SRE, compared to yours?

**Father:** I think our friends are very open as well. I think they are anyway.

**Mother:** I think we are pretty much the same. I think some of my friends who have daughters, rather than sons do tend to talk to their daughters more, but we will know about that in ten years from now when our daughter get older, but I think I will talk more to my daughter about periods and things like that because she will experience these things, where my sons won't, but it is important to me that my children know about sexual matters and relationships. Not like what it was like for us when we were growing up where you had to figure it out for yourself.

**Researcher:** Do you think in general more sex education is given to female children rather than male children?

**Mother:** Yes.

**Researcher:** At what age do you want your child to know about sexual matters?

**Father:** We have talked about this and I think by about the age of 12.

**Mother:** Yes, but I also think they need to be knowing about it before they go to secondary because that is when their friends will be saying things.

**Researcher:** Do the school involve parents in the educating of the children?

**Mother:** No, not enough.

**Researcher:** If no, how do you think the school could improve their approach to involving parents more?

**Father:** I think it would be better if they were telling us what they are teaching, just so we are prepared for any questions that may be asked. Also though if we know what is being taught then we can raise things with him.

**Researcher:** Would you have been as open answering these questions if your child/ren had been present?

**Mother:** Yes I think so.

**Father:** Yes, but he would probably laugh at how it was for us when we were younger.

**Mother:** Yes, but we have told him about what it was like for us.

**Father:** Yes, but we do sound old.

**Researcher:** If yes, why?

**Mother:** Like I say just because we have already told him what it was like for us.

**Father:** Yes, and he will pick a lot up just from what we say in our conversations.

**Researcher:** What main forms of the media (computers, magazines etc) do your child/ren use to learn about issues regarding SRE?

**Father:** The Internet.

**Mother:** Yes, the Internet. He is always on the Internet.

**Researcher:** What sorts of things do you think they learn from these sources that they do not get taught about elsewhere?

**Mother:** I don't know. I think he is learning from the Internet. He searches.

**Father:** Yes, he will go on there if he has heard something and wants to find out more about what it means.

**Mother:** Yes, he is quite inquisitive.

**Researcher:** Do you think they prefer to use these sources to learn about SRE?

**Mother:** I think he prefers to talk to people, such as his friends or us, but then he will use the Internet to find out more about something or just make sure he has the right information so he understands things that he has heard.

**Father:** Yes, that's just the way he is.

**Researcher:** What impact do you think the media (computers, magazines, etc) have on adolescents regarding the SRE that they learn?

**Father:** Yes, I think it does.

**Mother:** Yes, I do.

**Researcher:** Do you think the media act as a deterrent when showing the consequences and negativity associated with some sexual behaviours/issues?

**Father:** No, I think it opens things up.

**Mother:** Yes, because a lot of things that come up in the media can happen in real life and I just think it is a way of talking about the consequences of sex more.

**Father:** Yes, and I think that this wasn't around as much in our day which left us wondering, where now kids are not left wondering as much because it is seen and discussed more.

**Mother:** Yes, and in our day you wouldn't even see people kiss as much.

**Father:** That's it. Where now if our son wants to find out things there is so much he can refer to, but that information might not necessarily be there if it wasn't for the media.

**Researcher:** Do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing?

**Father:** I think it is, especially because with things being on a lot earlier these days they see more.

**Mother:** Yes, it was never like that when we were younger so it wasn't talked about as much.

**Father:** Yes, but him (the son) seeing these things I think that is why he will ask questions, so that is why I think the media are a good thing in that it generates conversations that might not have been talked about otherwise.

**Researcher:** Do you think the parents religion impacts on the SRE they give to their children?

**Mother:** No, I don't think it does, do you?

**Father:** No, I don't think so, either.

The son re-entered the room and the family explored the multimedia program together. The son took control of the computer and the mouse and chose to look at the '*True and False*' section. The son knew quite a lot of the answers (25/33), but the father would also say the correct answer to the questions his son struggled with. In total the family got 30 correct. The son also selected the section on relationships and the family watched the scenarios together saying nothing. After watching the CD the family were asked to



complete the post sexual knowledge questionnaire before being asked the following questions:

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Son:** It was good in teaching you things, especially doing the quiz.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD? (parents)

**Mother:** It seems good, yes.

**Father:** Yes, it seems alright.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Son:** No particular preference, but I thought the fly was funny.

**Mother:** What fly?

**Son:** The one that was bobbing about all over and talked in a Scottish accent.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Son:** I liked all of what I have seen.

**Father:** Yes, it seemed good.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Son:** My age.

**Father:** Yes, but I think it would be good also in the last year of primary school. Maybe not the quiz, but some of the sections on relationships was good because it taught about respect, consideration and the importance of communication.

**Researcher:** Was there any aspect of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Son:** No.

**Father:** No, because I think we have already talked about many of the things that came up on the CD.

**Mother:** Yes, and you learn about some of those things just as you are growing up anyway.

**Father:** Yes, but the CD just reinforces some things.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Son:** I don't know if there are.

**Father:** Not from what I have seen, but we will have to watch more this week.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Father:** Yes, I do.

**Son:** Yes.

**Researcher:** As a parent do you feel you could talk openly with your child about all aspects raised within the CD or is there things on the CD you were not aware of as a parent?

**Father:** No, I think we do talk openly anyway.

**Mother:** Yes, but I think between us we have quite a good knowledge base to teach our children, especially regarding the morals and values we try and instil in our children from a young age.

**Researcher:** After you have watched the CD do you feel you would be able to talk more openly with your parents about all aspects raised within the CD? (son)

**Son:** I will probably talk to them more when watching it, but I think I will just ask things as normal after that.

**WENT BACK ONE WEEK LATER** and asked the family to complete the follow-up sexual knowledge questionnaire before asking the following questions to the whole family to gain clarity as to how the CD has broken down any barriers when discussing SRE within the family.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Son:** I think it was good in that it gave you lots of information.

**Father:** Yes, I think it was good.

**Mother:** From what I saw I thought it was good and colourful, but I kept getting distracted by our daughter, so he mainly watched it with his dad.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Son:** I thought the fly was good, but also the scenarios, especially the ones with the real people talking part.

**Mother:** Yes, the fly was good. I actually saw it this time when watching bits of the CD.

**Father:** I just thought it was really informative and gave some good advice.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Father:** The fly annoyed me.

**Mother:** Yes, I wasn't keen on it either.

**Son:** Well I liked it all.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Father:** I think it was good for his age, but the body parts were good for younger kids when learning about the body.

**Mother:** Yes, that could be the section that I said would be good for primary age, but the other stuff they need to know by the age of 12 or 13.

**Researcher:** Was there any aspect of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Son:** No.

**Father:** No, because if he wanted to discuss anything he knows he could come to us.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Father:** No, there are things in there that we won't have maybe discussed in great detail, but I think we have pretty much covered the bits that we saw.

**Son:** We haven't really talked much about the different STIs, but I know that from school.

**Researcher:** Would you prefer to talk to your parents rather than find out about SRE aspects by using the CD?

**Son:** Both.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Father:** Yes, I think it would be good to generate conversations.

**Son:** Yes.

**Mother:** I think it would be helpful for families who can't discuss sexual matters openly.

**Researcher:** As a parent do you feel you could talk openly with your child about all aspects raised within the CD or is there things on the CD you were not aware of as a parent?

**Father:** I don't think it has changed much in our family, no.

**Mother:** I think it has given him chance to ask us more, just because topics were raised from the CD.

The family were given a de-brief of the study and thanked for their time.  
**End of Interview.**

## 14<sup>th</sup> Family Interview - Stage II

**Participants:** Female parent (34 years), father (34 years) and son (14).

**Consent form signed and retained by the family and researcher.**

**Researcher:** Thank you. I would also like to ask if it is possible for either one of you to leave the room so I could do the first interview.

Mother, father and son decided that the son should be interviewed first. The mother and father were then asked to take the demographics form and the '*Knowledge Quiz*' and the researcher and their son went to another room in the house. The researcher then started the interview process by asking the son the following questions.

### Interview with Son

**Researcher:** What sex and relationship education (SRE) has been taught to adolescents?

**Son:** I have had some at school and it covered all the basics. This was from about the age of 12.

**Researcher:** So can I ask what size of group is SRE taught in and is it mixed or single-sex?

**Son:** It was mixed and had about 30 of us in the class.

**Researcher:** Is this an ideal setting or would you prefer different sizes of groups and gender when being taught SRE? If different, how?

**Son:** No, it was fine. Not bothered about girls and boys being together when told about things like sex because it affects us all.

**Researcher:** Yes, so was any signposting given to say where you get further information or advice?

**Son:** Yes, we got leaflets, websites and a little booklet.

**Researcher:** Who has taught you the most about the SRE? (i.e. mother, father, school, etc)

**Son:** Probably my mum, dad and teachers.

**Researcher:** So who do you prefer to talk to about sex?

**Son:** My mum or dad or teachers.

**Researcher:** So who initiated the conversation concerning sexual matters?

**Son:** Both.

**Researcher:** If the parent, why do you think they told you about sexual matters?

**Son:** Because of the age I am and want me to be safe I suppose.

**Researcher:** Was it embarrassing to discuss sexual matters?

**Son:** No.

**Researcher:** So at what age were you when you first started to learn about sexual matters?

**Son:** I can't really remember but I have known things from about primary school.

**Researcher:** After discussions about sexual matters, were there still things you wanted to know more about?

**Son:** No.

**Researcher:** Who would you like to teach you about sexual matters?

**Son:** Teachers.

**Researcher:** Why, what is the reason for this?

**Son:** Probably because they know more.

**Researcher:** Do you think that you pick things up from other people's conversations regarding SRE?

**Son 1:** Yes.

**Researcher:** What sorts of sexual matters do you discuss with friends?

**Son:** Yes, but we have a joke about things based on what we are experiencing.

**Researcher:** What makes you want to talk to your friends about sexual matters?

**Son:** Because you can trust them.

**Researcher:** What aspects of SRE do you learn more about when talking to friends?

**Son:** What it is like for them really.

**Researcher:** Are there things that you would discuss with your friends that you would not discuss with your parents?

**Son:** No.

**Researcher:** Which parent do you mainly talk to about sexual matters?

**Son:** My dad.

**Researcher:** Why is it this parent? (i.e. factors)

**Son:** I don't know he just seems to be more knowledgeable about what I am going through.

**Researcher:** If father, why do you think your dad teaches the most about SRE, rather than the mother?

**Son:** Because he doesn't get embarrassed where I think my mum would.

**Researcher:** Why do you prefer to talk to this parent about sexual matters? (Is it possible due to being the same sex???)

**Son:** Probably because I am closer to him because we go biking a lot together.

**Researcher:** Would you prefer to discuss sexual matters with your other parent instead or as well?

**Son:** I do talk to my mum about things, but just not like I talk to my dad.

**Researcher:** Who initiates the conversations regarding sexual matters?

**Son:** Both.

**Researcher:** What SRE topics have your parents discuss with you, and at what age did these conversations occur?

**Son:** I can't remember, but I just talk in general to my dad about almost anything and everything.

**Researcher:** When and what circumstances are these conversations likely to occur?

**Son:** When we are out biking.

**Researcher:** What topics do your parents NOT discuss with you concerning SRE?

**Son:** Nothing, really.

**Researcher:** Where do you think you will learn about the sexual matters if your parent's don't teach you?

**Son:** Friends and school.

**Researcher:** Do you think your parent's have the most up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach you about sexual matters?

**Son:** Probably not.

**Researcher:** Are there any restrictions on not discussing sexual matters within the family amongst yourselves?

**Son:** No.

**Researcher:** Do you feel that your family talk openly about sexual matters within the family?

**Son:** Yes.

**Researcher:** How do you think other families communicate SRE, compared to yours?

**Son:** The same.

**Researcher:** Do you think in general more sex education is given to female children rather than male children?

**Son:** No, the same.

**Researcher:** At what age do you think your parents want you to know about sexual matters?

**Son:** From quite an early age I think because that is the way they have taught me. I think from about 10 onwards.

**Researcher:** Do the school involve your parents in the SRE you receive?

**Son:** No, not that I know of.

**Researcher:** Do you want your parents to have more involvement in the SRE you receive in school?

**Son:** I don't mind.

**Researcher:** If no, how do you think the school could improve their approach to involving parents more? NA/

**Researcher:** Would you prefer for sexual matters to be discussed more openly within the family?

**Son:** No, because I think we discuss it enough as it is.

**Researcher:** Would you have been as open answering these questions if your parents had been present?

**Son:** Yes.

**Researcher:** If yes, why?

**Son:** Because we do talk openly and I don't have anything to hide from them.

**Researcher:** What main forms of the media (computers, magazines etc) do you use to learn about issues regarding SRE?

**Son:** Television mainly.

**Researcher:** What sorts of things do you learn from these sources that you do not get taught about elsewhere?

**Son:** Don't know really, but just what it is like for other teenagers.

**Researcher:** Do you prefer to use these sources to learn about SRE?

**Son:** I don't mind, I think you just pick different things up from different people and places.

**Researcher:** What impact do you think the media (computers, magazines, etc) has regarding the SRE that you learn?

**Son:** A big impact.

**Researcher:** Do you think the media act as a deterrent when showing the consequences and negativity associated with some sexual behaviours/issues?

**Son:** In some cases.

**Researcher:** Do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing?

**Son:** A good thing because it teaches people about things that they need to know.

**Researcher:** Do you think the religious beliefs you have been brought up with influences the SRE you receive?

**Son:** No.

**Researcher:** So can I ask if we look at the CD together and then I ask you some more questions.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Son:** Okay.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Son:** The graphics were good.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Son:** I don't know of any.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Son:** 11 or 12 years old.

**Researcher:** Was there any aspect of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Son:** No.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Son:** No.

**Researcher:** Would you prefer to talk to your parents rather than find out about SRE aspects by using the CD?

**Son:** Talk to parents, mainly my dad.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Son:** For some families, but not in this one.

**Researcher:** After you have watched the CD do you feel you would be able to talk more openly with your parents about all aspects raised within the CD?

**Son:** No, because we talk openly anyway.

### **Interview with Parents**

**Researcher:** What sex and relationship education (SRE) was taught to you as parents when you were younger?

**Father:** Not enough.

**Mother:** Not a great deal at school. We got taught in assembly where everybody just laughed and nobody took it seriously and then the basics in biology.

**Father:** Yes, there was no information on contraception, STIs, relationships and things like that. It was just the raw sex stuff that you can get from a text book.

**Researcher:** Which of your parents taught you about sexual matters, and why do you think it was this parent?

**Mother:** Neither.

**Father:** Mine were totally open about everything and nothing was hidden.

**Researcher:** Why do you think they were so keen to educate you about SRE matters?

**Father:** I think so I didn't get into trouble, but also they had a pretty sheltered experience of sex education when they were younger and wanted it to be different for me I suppose.

**Researcher:** Did your own parents ever comment on the sex education that they received when they were younger?

**Father:** Yes, and how bad it was.

**Mother:** My parents never discussed anything with me about topics like that. We had an open relationship but we never talked about sex.

**Researcher:** With hindsight, do you think your parents had sufficient knowledge to teach you about sexual matters?

**Father:** Yes, I think mine did.

**Mother:** I think my possibly did, but it was more to do with it being embarrassing to discuss more than anything else.

**Researcher:** Do you feel your family talked openly about sexual matters when you were younger?

**Father:** Mine did, definitely.

**Mother:** Never.

**Researcher:** If yes, what aspects of sex education were discussed?

**Father:** Everything from puberty to sexual relationships. Nothing was left uncovered.

**Researcher:** If no, why do you think sexual matters were not discussed more openly within your family when you were younger?

**Mother:** Embarrassment.

**Researcher:** Who taught the SRE? (i.e. mother, father, school etc)

**Father:** I think my parents, but mainly my father.

**Mother:** Probably from friends.

**Researcher:** At what age was SRE taught and what topics were discussed?

**Father:** I was probably about 9 or 10 and the puberty discussion started and then it all just followed on from there really.

**Mother:** I think I would have been about 13 and 14 and the very basics were covered in the biology class, but that was it, the rest I learnt from peers.

**Researcher:** How and in what context was SRE taught?

**Father:** Mainly from home with me and it was just talked about like we are talking now. Very comfortable and no *'Right we are going to sit down and talk about ...'* just very casual I guess.

**Mother:** Mine was just a school and it started telling you about the organs and then lead on from there.

**Researcher:** Were there any aspects OF SRE that you still wanted to know more about?

**Mother:** Yes, definitely. You were always left wondering what was right and what was true.

**Father:** You see that never happened to me. It was almost like I learn everything from such a young age and nothing was made an issue of.

**Researcher:** With hindsight, do you think the topics associated with the SRE you were given were younger was accurate and correct?

**Father:** I think it was for me because the information came from my parents who knew what they were talking about, but I remember my friends coming out with things that I knew were just not right.

**Mother:** I think I was told a lot of things that were not true, but I only really had my friends to learn from, so yes the information wasn't always accurate.

**Researcher:** How did you find out SRE for yourself?

**Mother:** Through magazines and the problems pages. They seemed to teach you a lot.

**Father:** Just by asking and talking to my parents.

**Researcher:** Did you learn any SRE from listening to other people conversations?



**Father:** Yes, I do and I think that is good in that it gives people chance to think about what they want to know more about, so they can ask.

**Mother:** Yes, it helps to try and piece things together.

**Researcher:** What age do you think you were when you felt you had adequate knowledge of SRE topics?

**Father:** 35, (laughs). No seriously, I think I knew it all when I was about 18 because I had chance to put into context what I had been told.

**Mother:** I think I would probably have been about 18 as well, but I think I still found out about old things even after then, such as about contraception and STIs.

**Researcher:** With hindsight, do you think you knew enough sex education at your different developmental stages to prepare you for adult life?

**Mother:** I suppose so. I was lucky that I started my period when I had had the sex education at school, so I think so.

**Father:** That is why I think my parents were so keen to tell me everything about sex because my mum had that experience of starting her period and not knowing what was going on, so I think that was why they equipped me with the knowledge.

**Researcher:** If you look back to the SRE that was taught when you were younger, how do you think it could have been improved to provide you with the information you wanted or needed at the time?

**Father:** Demonstrations! (Laughs). No but seriously they give all of this education, but they don't show you how to use condoms or explain the pure ins and outs of having sex. It is almost like you are just suppose to know how to have sex and keep safe based on what people have told you.

**Mother:** I suppose it could happen that way if people were in smaller groups, especially because nobody is going to ask about anything when you are in large groups and at the risk of being laughed at. I mean at that age you tell people you know it all and that you have done it just so you don't feel stupid or left out and when I think back I think how sad it is that people have to lie just to be accepted.

**Researcher:** Would you have preferred for SRE matters to have been discussed more openly within the family when you were younger?

**Mother:** Yes, I do for me.

**Father:** No, not really because it already was open in my family.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the SRE that was taught, compared with today's teaching?

**Father:** I don't know what is taught today.

**Mother:** I don't know that much about it. I know we got an authority form sent home to ask if we wanted him to be part of a sex education lesson at the beginning of senior school.

**Researcher:** How was sex discussed when you were younger and why do you think it was discussed in this way? (I.e. embarrassment?)

**Father:** I think it was good for me.

**Mother:** I think it was just so embarrassing and that's why I got told very little from adults. I know my parents didn't tell me anything, but even the school teachers were red faced and embarrassed when telling you things, so I think that has been passed on to how I am with our son. I think I would get embarrassed if I had to tell him all the things his dad has.

**Father:** Would you?

**Mother:** Yes, because I don't know the best way to talk about sex and things like that. It might be different if he was a girl, but I don't know if it would or how I would discuss it openly. I know we are open with him about everything, but you do tell him more about sex than I do. Sorry, I am just being honest.

**Researcher:** Do you as a parent feel you have the up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach your child about sexual matters?

**Mother:** Probably not, not about what's available for your people and where they can go for help.

**Father:** I think we can give him the knowledge that he needs know and then he will learn things for himself, so I think I do to equip him with the information that he needs to know or I would find out if I didn't know something that he asked or wanted to know more about.

**Researcher:** What sex and relationship education (SRE) has been taught to your children?

**Mother:** Like I said before I don't know, but he came home once and they must have had some sort of sex education because he told me about how a boy had been asked a question and he got it wrong and the whole class laughed at it and I said to him '*I hope you didn't laugh because that is not on; its cruel*'. He saw how cruel it was and just said about embarrassed the young boy was, so I don't think the sex education can be that good if that is what goes on.

**Father:** No, I agree. We have brought him up well, I think and we know that he knows everything there is to know about sex, except the experience.

**Mother:** We hope.

**Father:** Yes, but we have prepared him, even if the school were to give bad sex education we have made sure he knows about safety, respect, love and caring in relation to sex and sexual relationships. I talk to him about it and I know he has a good understanding about things.

**Researcher:** What size of group was SRE taught in and was is it mixed or single-sex group?

**Father:** I don't know.

**Mother:** I think at a guess, it was all boys.

**Researcher:** Do you know if signposting was given to say where they could get further information or advice?

**Father:** Haven't seen any.

**Mother:** I think he brought something home with '*Connexions*' written on it, but I don't know what the booklet contained.

**Researcher:** Who has taught SRE to your children (i.e. mother, father, school, etc)?

**Father:** Yes, probably me or the television, but he has had some deep conversations with you as well, hasn't he.

**Mother:** Yes, more about advice really.

**Father:** I think we tend to have quite a lot of conversations when it is just me and him when we are out bike riding.

**Researcher:** Why do you think they prefer to learn about sexual matters from this person (Is it possible due to being the same sex)?

**Father:** I like to think we are close and that he can trust us.

**Researcher:** At what age was SRE taught to your children and what topics were discussed?

**Mother:** Probably from as young as 9 or 10, but I think we may have touched on sexually related things before that, but I can't remember what they would have been.

**Researcher:** Who initiated the discussion of SRE?

**Mother:** Both.

**Father:** Yes, both really. I know when he has asked me things I have tended to make a joke of it, but that's the way we are as a family, we always seem to laugh about things but still have a serious conversation.

**Researcher:** Was it embarrassing for you as a parent to discuss sexual matters with your child?

**Father:** No, I don't get embarrassed for me, but I sometimes get embarrassed for him if something full-on comes on the television.

**Mother:** I think it is sometimes for me simply because that was the way it was taught to me.

**Researcher:** If yes, what topics were embarrassing to talk about (e.g. relationships)?

**Mother:** Masturbation! (Laughs)

**Father:** Yes, but he will talk to you about what things are like for girls.

**Mother:** Yes, I see to do the emotional side, where you hand out the facts.

**Father:** Yes, but he gets embarrassed talking to us both about relationships. I remember not so long ago he had said he was meeting some friends to go to the cinema and he asked to be dropped off at the bus-stop. I had said I would take him to the cinema and he said you can't because there are 6 of us and we all won't fit into the car. We knew fine well he was meeting a girl, but just didn't want us knowing encase we took the mick out of him.

**Mother:** Yes, but that made it difficult for us when he came in because we were asking him questions about the film and what his friends watched and one thing and the other, but he didn't really know how to answer the questions and just brushed over them.

**Father:** Yes, we only found out that he had been to the cinema, but with four girls, who were supposedly just friends. He thinks we are daft.

**Researcher:** Why do you get embarrassed talking about these topics?

**Mother:** Just because I don't know how to answer without embarrassing him, really.

**Researcher:** After discussions, what aspects of SRE do you think your children? still want to know more about?

**Father:** I don't think there are any, because he would just ask.

**Researcher:** Who would your like to teach your children about sexual matters?

**Father:** I think I would like us to.

**Mother:** Yes, even though I am not good at giving full—on information I think we need to teach him because we know how he is developing and the sorts of things he is wanting to know about.

**Researcher:** Why, and what is the reason for this? AS ABOVE

**Researcher:** What sorts of sexual matters do you think your child/ren discuss with their friends?

**Father:** Yes, I think he talks to them, but I don't know what they discuss.

**Mother:** Yes, it is difficult for us to work this out because he only has a small unit of friends around here. His main friends are from Guisborough because that is where he goes to school.

**Father:** Yes, but he has told us about them and told us of the jokes they tell regarding sex, but we don't know too much about them as people because he mixes with them at school so we don't get to meet them.

**Researcher:** Are these friends of the same or opposite sex?

**Father:** Both.

**Researcher:** Why do you think your child wanted to talk to their friends about sexual matters?

**Mother:** Just to try and find out more about what and how they should behave as a teenager I think.

**Researcher:** What aspects of SRE do you think they learn more about when talking to their friends?

**Father:** The slang terms and then he tries to shock us with them.

**Mother:** Yes, anything that is not in the formal sex education.

**Father:** More about slang terms and they joke to try and find out more information.

**Mother:** Yes, because he will tell us some of them.

**Researcher:** Do you think your child will discuss some sexual matters with his friends that he would not talk to you about?

**Mother:** Maybe.

**Father:** Possibly, but I think it is more likely that he would talk to us and then try and suss it out in a discreet way from his friends to make sure what we have told him is accurate for his era, but I am not sure what things these are likely to be.

**Researcher:** Which parent mainly talks to their children about sexual matters?

**Mother:** Him (the father).

**Father:** Yes, me I think.

**Researcher:** Why is it this parent (i.e. factors)?

**Father:** Because we spend a lot of time together alone, and these conversations are mixed in with something else like riding a bike so it takes the emphasis of the fact that we are talking about sex.

**Researcher:** Why do you think they prefer to talk to this parent about sexual matters (Is it possible due to being the same sex)? AS ABOVE

**Researcher:** Who initiates the conversations regarding sexual matters?

**Father:** Both.

**Researcher:** What topics do parents discuss with their children, and at what age and is it different for sons and daughters?

**Father:** Pretty much everything.

**Mother:** Yes, except relationships he is having.

**Researcher:** When and what circumstances are these conversations likely to occur?

**Father:** If we are out bike riding, out having a meal as a family.

**Mother:** When I am preparing food, you two talk and then bring me in on the conversation.

**Researcher:** What topics do parents NOT discuss with their children?

**Father:** None, we are very open with him.

**Mother:** Yes, I think we are.

**Researcher:** Where do you think your child will learn about the sexual matters if you don't teach them?

**Mother:** His friends.

**Father:** Yes and possibly school.

**Researcher:** Are there any restrictions on not discussing sexual matters within the family amongst yourselves?

**Both parents agree:** No.

**Researcher:** Do you feel that your family talk openly about sexual matters within the family?

**Mother:** I think so, I think it is more embarrassing for us than it is for him, more for me than him (the father) because he was brought up in a family where sex was discussed quite openly, were I wasn't.

**Father:** Yes, but we get there in the end together. It doesn't matter who talk to him about it as long as he gets all the correct information.

**Researcher:** Yes, so how do you think other families communicate SRE, compared to yours?

**Mother:** I think because we were quite young when we had our son, our opinions on the amount of SRE we teach him are a bit different to how other parents teach their children. I know when we are with our friends who have children younger than ours and we mention what we have told our son, they say '*god I am dreading the day we have to talk about sex*' but we have done it this way so he knows everything so he can make the right choices. So I think we are maybe a lot more open than the families we know.

**Father:** I think as well though there are some people out there who should just not be parents. I mean some parents barely look after their children, let alone educate them and I think that is wrong.

**Researcher:** Do you think in general more sex education is given to female children rather than male children?

**Father:** I don't know what is given to the boys so I couldn't comment.

**Mother:** Yes, I wouldn't even be able to compare for us because we haven't had a girl, just one boy.

**Researcher:** At what age do you want your children to know about sexual matters?

**Father:** I don't think there is a set age, but I suppose for the larger topic area was covered when he was about 9 or 10.

**Mother:** Yes, something like that. It was more when he started asking odd questions that we would elaborate on things and tell him probably much more than he was expecting.

**Researcher:** Do the school involve parents in the educating of the children?

**Mother:** No, except the once.

**Researcher:** If no, how do you think the school could improve their approach to involving parents more?

**Mother:** It would be nice if they could inform us just so we are prepared for any questions he might ask.

**Father:** Yes, like that time he was being a git and asked you what masturbation was?

**Mother:** Yes, he was trying to embarrass me that day though.

**Father:** Yes, that's what I mean he was being a git, because he knows about masturbation because that is one of the things we have had a good conversation about when we went biking at Whitby, so he does know things.

**Mother:** Yes, he was just trying to embarrass his old mum, swine.

**Researcher:** What main forms of the media (computers, magazines etc) do your child/ren use to learn about issues regarding SRE?

**Father:** I think television educates him a lot about sexual matters.

**Mother:** There is that much out there and I think he picks things up from magazines, watching movies at the cinema, television, everything really.

**Father:** Yes, I mean they used to have the water-shed of 9pm as a means for not putting sexual things and swearing on television where there is no point now because bed-hopping is on as early as 7pm in some soaps and I think that can give the wrong impression, if not to our son, but other more easily influenced children.

**Researcher:** What sorts of things do you think they learn from these sources that they do not get taught about elsewhere?

**Mother:** I think they are trying to learn what the norm is in that they are watching people in soaps and relating that to real life. I think the media can be good in that it shows relationships and sex, but if you look at the story-line it almost makes it acceptable to have affairs, multiple partners and casual sex and that maybe what some young people want and need, but we have brought our son up knowing different to that so it almost conflicts with what we are telling him is good and right because they show something that is not good and not right, but glorify it in a way that makes it acceptable.

**Researcher:** Do you think they prefer to use these sources to learn about SRE?

**Mother:** I think it is easy for some to sit and watch a soap and be convinced that that is how it is because it is easier than using conventional methods, such as reading.

**Father:** Yes and sex is much more of a talked about topic than when we were younger. I think it is good that it is talked about more openly, but I think it just needs to be shown in a way that it covers responsibility, respect, caring for others and doing something that you want to do for yourself and not that sex should take place because it is seen or portrayed as the norm.

**Researcher:** What impact do you think the media (computers, magazines, etc) have on adolescents regarding the SRE that they learn?

**Father:** Massive.

**Researcher:** Do you think the media act as a deterrent when showing the consequences and negativity associated with some sexual behaviours/issues?

**Both parents agree:** Sometimes.

**Researcher:** Do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing?

**Father:** A bit of both really.

**Mother:** Yes, I mean it can be good in that it covers topical issues and covers everything.

**Father:** Yes, but it can go over the top some times in the fact that everyone is gay, lesbian, having casual sex without showing the negatives of these behaviours, such as STIs, teenage pregnancy and other things like that.

**Researcher:** Would you have been as open in answering these questions if you son had been present?

**Mother:** Yes, I think so.

**Father:** Yes, because we do talk openly about things.

**Mother:** Yes, he will probably ask us what we said later.

**Father:** Yes, and then we will ask him what he said to see what he thinks of his old parents regarding sexual conversations.

**Researcher:** Do you think the parent's religion impacts on the SRE they give to their children?

**Mother:** No.

**Father:** I think it can in strict religious families, but I have never had first hand experience of the impact religion can have.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Father:** It seemed good.

**Mother:** Yes, I wish there was something like that when I was growing-up.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Father:** It seems to have a modern slant on it.

**Mother:** Yes, bright as well.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Father:** Nothing based on what I saw.

**Mother:** No.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Father:** Young.

**Mother:** Yes, about 10 or 11.

**Researcher:** Was there any aspect of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Both parents agree:** No.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Both parents agree:** No.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Father:** Not in ours, but in other families, yes.

**Mother:** Yes, especially for those parents and children who feel embarrassed when discussing sexual issues.

**Researcher:** As a parent do you feel you could talk openly with your child about all aspects raised within the CD or is there things on the CD you were not aware of as a parent?

**Mother:** No.

**Father:** No, because we have covered all the information on the CD, mostly when he was far younger.

**WENT BACK ONE WEEK LATER** and asked the following questions to the whole family to gain clarity as to how the CD has broken down any barriers when discussing SRE within the family.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Son:** It was okay, but too young for me.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Son:** The true characters made it better.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Son:** Just thought it was a bit babyish.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Son:** 10 or 11 year olds.

**Researcher:** Was there any aspect of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Son:** No.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Son:** No.

**Researcher:** Would you prefer to talk to your parents rather than find out about SRE aspects by using the CD?

**Son:** Yes, I would prefer to talk to them.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Son:** In some families, but not mine.

**Researcher:** Do you feel you talk openly with your parents about all aspects raised within the CD or are there things on the CD you were not aware of as a young person?

**Son:** No, we are open about everything.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Mother:** Yes, it was good.

**Father:** Yes, very modern with all the graphics and colouring.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Mother:** I thought the virtual clinic was good.

**Father:** Yes, and I thought the way they explained the body parts was good, but simple as well.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Mother:** None, really. It was good.

**Father:** Yes.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Father:** About 9 years for some of it. I think our son found it a bit young for him.

**Mother:** Yes, he had said that he hadn't learnt anything from it.

**Researcher:** Was there any aspect of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Both parents agree:** No.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Both parents agree:** No.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Father:** Definitely for some families.

**Mother:** Yes, especially if they don't have an open relationship with each other.

**Researcher:** As parents do you feel you could talk openly with your child about all aspects raised within the CD or is there things on the CD you were not aware of as a parent?

**Father:** No, I think with us already having the closeness with our son and the fact that we already talk openly the CD hasn't had the impact that it may have on other families.

**Mother:** Yes, the CD was good but I don't think it will change things in our family.

**End of Interview.**



## 15<sup>th</sup> Family Interview - Stage II

**Participants:** Divorced female parent (44 years), son 1 (14) and son 2 (12).

**Consent form signed and retained by the family and researcher.**

**Researcher:** Thank you. I would also like to ask if it is possible for either one of you to leave the room so I could do the first interview.

Mother and sons decided that the sons should be interviewed first. The mother was asked to take the demographics form and the sexual knowledge questionnaire to another room to be completed. The researcher then asked the two sons to complete the demographic form and the sexual knowledge questionnaire before starting the interview process by asking the following questions:

### Interview with Sons

**Researcher:** What sex and relationship education (SRE) has been taught to you both?

**Son 1:** We got a video when we first went into secondary school and that included females and male hormones.

**Son 2:** We also found out about sex and periods in science at that time as well.

**Researcher:** So can I ask what size of group is SRE taught in and is it mixed or single-sex?

**Son 2:** Just a normal class of 30.

**Son 1:** Yes, boys and girls together.

**Researcher:** Is this an ideal setting or would you prefer different sizes of groups and gender when being taught SRE? If different, how?

**Son 2:** Don't mind.

**Son 1:** Yes, but it is better if it is mixed because you can find out more about the opposite sex and what it is like for them.

**Son 2:** Yes, and it is more of a laugh.

**Researcher:** So was any signposting given to say where you get further information or advice?

**Son 2:** Well we got given websites, but told we didn't have to go on it.

**Researcher:** Did you get anything else like a sex education roadshow?

**Son 1:** No.

**Researcher:** Which school do you go to?

**Son 1:** St Peter's.

**Researcher:** And is that a Catholic school?

**Son 1:** Yes.

**Researcher:** So would you know where to go for contraceptive and sexual health advice?

**Son 1:** Yes, I would.

**Son 2:** Yes, I know where to go but I haven't been.

**Researcher:** Okay, so who has taught you the most about the SRE (i.e. mother, father, school, etc)?

**Son 1:** Probably school.

**Son 2:** Yes, school.

**Researcher:** So who initiated the conversation concerning sexual matters?

**Son 1:** The teachers in the class.

**Son 2:** Yes, they told us about reproduction in biology as one of our first topics and then they have told us about things after that.

**Researcher:** Was it embarrassing to discuss sexual matters?

**Son 2:** No, I don't get embarrassed talking about it.

**Son 1:** No, it is a good laugh and other people ask questions so you learn from them as well.

**Son 2:** Other kids normally ask the questions that I want to know answers to, so I just sit back and listen.

**Researcher:** So at what age were you when you first started to learn about sexual matters?

**Son 1:** When we were 12 the school nurse came in with a video, but nothing before then.

**Researcher:** After discussions about sexual matters, were there still things you wanted to know more about?

**Son 1:** No.

**Son 2:** No, because emotionally you can only learn so much in one year, and then in the next year you get told more and then learn more that way on.

**Researcher:** Who would you like to teach you about sexual matters?

**Son 1:** A mixture of school and friends.

**Son 2:** Yes, school and your mates because, but also dad.

**Researcher:** Why, what is the reason for this?

**Son 1:** Well, you can learn from your mates but you can also have a laugh about things with your mates to not make everything so serious.

**Son 2:** Yes but dad would be able to tell us about things as well because he has been through all the stuff we are going through as lads.

**Researcher:** Do you think that your pick things up from other peoples conversations regarding SRE?

**Son 1:** Yes.

**Son 2:** Yes, you do but you don't realise it at the time.

**Researcher:** What sorts of sexual matters do you discuss with friends?

**Son 1:** Things that are happening to lads mainly. We just have a laugh about it.

**Son 2:** We are all in one big gang really and we know each other well so we can have a laugh and be really open, but honest because we are all mates together.

**Researcher:** What makes you want to talk to your friends about sexual matters?

**Son 2:** Because you can trust them and they are more our age.

**Son 1:** Yes, our friends are both boys and girls in the gang.

**Researcher:** What aspects of SRE do you learn more about when talking to friends?

**Son 2:** Just what they are going through really.

**Son 1:** Yes, but also the things that girls go through and how they feel.

**Researcher:** Do you think that your friends know more about sexual matters than you do?

**Son 2:** They might know different things, but I wouldn't say more than us because we all talk about what we know anyway.

**Son 1:** I don't know, but if they knew things I didn't they would tell me and I would tell them what they didn't know.

**Researcher:** Which parent do you mainly talk to about sexual matters?

**Son 1:** Mum.

**Son 2:** Yes, my mum.

**Researcher:** Why is it this parent (i.e. factors)?

**Son 2:** Because we see our mum all the time, but we don't see our dad very much anymore.

**Son 1:** Yes, and I think she feels she has to talk to us a lot more about it because we don't see our dad.

**Researcher:** Why do you think your mum teaches you the most about SRE topics, than your father?

**Son 1:** I think she sees it as her responsibility.

**Son 2:** Yes, but she wants the best for us as well.

**Researcher:** Why do you prefer to talk to this parent about sexual matters (Is it possible due to being the same sex)?

**Son 2:** Because we live with her and see her more.

**Son 1:** Yes, she is always the one that's there.

**Researcher:** Who initiates the conversations regarding sexual matters?

**Son 2:** My mum.

**Son 1:** Yes, but also our sister as well because she will be talking to mum about things and then bring us into the conversation.

**Researcher:** What SRE topics have your parents discuss with you, and at what age did these conversations occur?

**Son 1:** I think it would mainly be when we were going into secondary school, because that's the time the school would be telling us things.

**Researcher:** When and what circumstances are these conversations likely to occur?

**Son 2:** Just anytime.

**Son 1:** Yes, just randomly. It can be anytime regardless of what we are doing or watching.

**Researcher:** What topics do your parents NOT discuss with you concerning SRE?

**Son 1:** Nothing, I talk to her about everything really.

**Son 2:** Yes, so do I because I know she understands what I am saying.

**Researcher:** Where do you think you will learn about the sexual matters if your parent's don't teach you?

**Both sons:** School and friends.

**Researcher:** Do you think your parent's have the most up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach you about sexual matters?

**Son 1:** No.

**Son 2:** Being a nurse she would know stuff that the school wouldn't, and they know things that she wouldn't.

**Son 1:** Yes, she will talk more about STIs and contraception, where the school will talk more about how sex happens and when it is likely to occur.

**Researcher:** Are there any restrictions on not discussing sexual matters within the family amongst yourselves?

**Son 2:** No.

**Son 1:** No, we can talk whenever, and about whatever.

**Researcher:** Do you feel that your family talk openly about sexual matters within the family?

**Son 2:** Yes.

**Son 1:** Yes, and we do with family friends as well. My sister's friends came around the other night who are gay and they just come out with stuff, but really important things. Things that you want to know, but not saying it in such a serious way and in a way that is really relaxed.

**Researcher:** How do you think other families communicate SRE, compared to yours?

**Son 1:** I don't think they are as open as we are, because we will also ask things if we are not sure where I don't think some other young people would.

**Son 2:** I think it depends how confident they are in talking to their parents.

**Son 1:** Yes, our mum talks to us and then throws things back at us so we talk about it, but I don't think all parents are like her.

**Researcher:** Do you think in general more sex education is given to female children rather than male children?

**Son 1:** Obviously they need to know more, but I pick up on the things they are told.

**Son 2:** Yes, and I think with us having an older sister that helps as well.

**Son 1:** Yes, but we learn from our friends who are girls also.

**Son 2:** Yes, that's true.

**Researcher:** Some young males sometimes feel that the SRE less SRE matters are discussed with young females, but do you agree?

**Son 2:** No, not really.

**Son 1:** No, I think boys can learn a lot from what is told to girls and I feel I know quite a bit about both sexes.

**Researcher:** At what age do you think your parents want you to know about sexual matters?

**Son 1:** Probably 12 years old.

**Son 2:** Yes, probably at the age of 12 when going into secondary school.

**Researcher:** Do the school involve your parents in the SRE you receive?

**Son 1:** I like it the way it is.

**Son 2:** Yes, so do I.

**Researcher:** Do you want your parents to have more involvement in the SRE you receive in school?

**Son 1:** Yes.

**Son 2:** Yes, because she is not going to have a go at us because it is our opinion.

**Researcher:** What main forms of the media (computers, magazines etc) do you use to learn about issues regarding SRE?

**Son 2:** Text books, videos from school.

**Son 1:** Magazines.

**Researcher:** What sorts of things do you learn from these sources that you do not get taught about elsewhere?

**Son 1:** Just about the facts really.

**Son 2:** Yes and how things work in the body.

**Researcher:** Do you prefer to use these sources to learn about SRE?

**Both sons:** Yes.

**Researcher:** What impact do you think the media (computers, magazines, etc) has regarding the SRE that you learn?

**Son 1:** A lot.

**Son 2:** Yes, but not too much of an impact.

**Researcher:** Do you think the media act as a deterrent when showing the consequences and negativity associated with some sexual behaviours/issues?

**Son 2:** No.

**Son 1:** Watching programmes about young mother can be a bit scary, but not if your careful and take precautions.

**Researcher:** When reading magazines, watching TV, videos and other media types do you feel that you can relate to what you are reading about or watching?

**Son 1:** No, just see it for what it is.

**Son 2:** No.

**Researcher:** When using the media to learn about SRE do you feel you learn more about the opposite sex?

**Son 1:** Sometimes, but not in a learning way, but just see how it is from their perspective.

**Researcher:** Do you feel more confident with the knowledge you have learnt when using the different media types?

**Both sons agree:** Yes.

**Researcher:** Do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing?

**Son 1:** Both, it makes you think too much and puts fear into you about things you probably wouldn't think of at our age.

**Son 2:** Yes, but it is good from the point of view from what you learn.

**Researcher:** Do you think the religious beliefs you have been brought up with influences the SRE you receive?

**Son 1:** No.

**Son 2:** No.

**Researcher:** So can I ask if we look at the CD together and then I ask you some more questions.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Son 2:** Thought it was straight forward and simple.

**Son 1:** Yes, it tells you the information of how things are.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Son 2:** The fact that they used real people.

**Son 1:** I liked the quiz. I thought that was good.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Son 2:** The fly was a bit weird.

**Son 1:** What fly?

**Son 2:** I will show you later.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Both sons agree:** 12 to 15.

**Researcher:** Was there any aspect of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Both sons agree:** No.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Both sons agree:** No.

**Researcher:** Would you prefer to talk to your parents rather than find out about SRE aspects by using the CD?

**Son 1:** Probably both.

**Son 2:** Yes, because she will know things that are not on the CD.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Both sons agree:** Yes.

**Researcher:** After your parents have watched the CD do you feel they would be able to talk more openly with you about all aspects raised within the CD or is there things on the CD they will not be aware of as a parent?

**Son 2:** Yes, because things will be said about what she has seen and what we have seen.

**Son 1:** Yes, it would help more in families though where they don't talk to their mum like we do.

**Researcher:** May I ask you to complete the post sexual knowledge questionnaire before I interview you mum?

**Both agreed.**

**Researcher:** Thank you.

The following questions were asked to the mother.

### **Interview with Mother**

**Researcher:** What sex and relationship education (SRE) was taught to you as parents when you were younger?

**Mother:** I think the basic sex education that was given in biology, which covered menstruation where sanitary towels got passed around whilst the boys laughed through the window. That was our sex education from school.

**Researcher:** Which of your parents taught you about sexual matters, and why do you think it was this parent?

**Mother:** I can't ever remember my parents ever talking about sex or anything to do with it, but I do remember having these books in the wardrobe at home. I think they were called '*The book of life*' with different volumes. I remember reading all of them and anything to do with the body, sex, and what sexual intercourse was, was in these books.

**Researcher:** If the mother – why do you think fathers do not talk to their children about sex?

**Mother:** Even though my mother never discussed sexual matters with me, my father also did not talk about it. As far as he was concerned that was not his role, but the responsibility of my mother. Even though I think she knew I was reading these books from the bottom of the wardrobe she never talked to me about things, not even to explain how the body works. I do think my father would have also been embarrassed to discuss it sexual things, but I don't think he would have talked to me about it even if I did ask about things.

**Researcher:** Did your own parents ever comment on the sex education that they received when they were younger?

**Mother:** No.

**Researcher:** With hindsight, do you think your parents had sufficient knowledge to teach you about sexual matters?

**Mother:** I think my mother would have had some of the knowledge but I remember her mum, my gran saying to her about contraception '*you don't go all the way to South Bank*'. I used to think what do you mean? So I asked her and she said '*you don't go all the way to South Bank for contraception because in Grange Town they just pull-out*'.

After my gran had died I remember telling my mum this and she was mortified that my gran had told me such things. Now my gran would openly talk to me about anything. She was a single mum after her third child her husband died, but I still don't think she talked to my mum or her sons about sexual matters because it was just not talked about when they were younger. I remember when I was in my twenty's my mum told me about when she started her periods, they used rags as sanitary towels that they had to wash out every day. That's how bad it was and she saved herself to have sex until when she was married, but they must have known what to do because she got pregnant on her honeymoon. So they clearly must have had the knowledge to fathom it out, whether it was lust or whatever I don't know. I mean I think it is the same with masturbation. I will say to people don't tell me you don't masturbate, especially males, but the subject is still as taboo as sex was when I was younger.

**Researcher:** Do you feel your family talked openly about sexual matters when you were younger?

**Mother:** No my family are strict Catholics and there is no sex before marriage type thing. I think because of that it was you don't need to be knowing things because you shouldn't be doing it. I mean my mother is very open and she has a brilliant sense of humour. She was a primary school teacher so she had no problems talking about things, but sex is just not one of the things she discussed with me and I think that was strongly influenced by the religious side of things.

**Researcher:** If no, why do you think sexual matters were not discussed more openly within your family when you were younger?

**Mother:** I think ultimately religion and if I had ever gone home pregnant I would have been sent off to Ireland. It was that taboo in the early 60's. I remember I went with a friend to go on the pill at the age of 15 and my mother found the pills. She then told my father who slapped me across the face. They were disgusted and I wasn't even practising sex. I just took responsibility for myself, even though I didn't know I had to take the pills every day. I just thought you took one and that was it.

**Researcher:** So when you got prescribed the contraceptive pill, were you not given information on how to take it or when to take it?

**Mother:** No, I just thought that you took one and that was it, but I didn't realise how they all worked within the body to prevent a baby being made in that it was part of cycle.

**Researcher:** So you were given contraception without contraceptive advice?

**Mother:** Yes, it was only when I went back that it got explained to me.

**Researcher:** Who taught the SRE (i.e. mother, father, school, etc)?

**Mother:** I probably taught myself by reading books, from listening to peers about what they had done or hadn't done and just trying to fathom it out how it worked really.

**Researcher:** At what age was SRE taught and what topics were discussed?

**Mother:** I think they must have brushed over it at some stage, because I had an underlying knowledge of what it was all about and by the time you went to college everybody was at it and it was then discussed openly, but I think it may have been at the age of about the age of 14, but like I say I would read things way before they were told to me. I think that is just the type of person I am. If I don't know something I will find it out and when I was younger that seemed the best way of building your knowledge because people just did not talk about sex, at all really.

**Researcher:** How and in what context was SRE taught?

**Mother:** I would say it was mainly in a class room setting, but it wasn't in relationship to having a sexual relationship, it was more about the act rather than anything else. I don't think they put enough emphasis on when the right time was to have sex and with whom it was right to have sex with and why would you do it.

**Researcher:** Were there any aspects of SRE that you still wanted to know more about?

**Mother:** Probably not at the time, because I don't know what else there was to know. Probably what I was given was enough because we were not taught beyond what they told us, otherwise they would have seen it like they were encouraging us to have sex and that was just not acceptable or to be honest with you allowed until you were married. I think as well that even if you were not Catholic there was still this barrier saying you must save yourself until you are married.

**Researcher:** So were there any aspects of SRE you think you needed to know more about?

**Mother:** Well I don't think I had the knowledge of contraception, but I think that lack of knowledge came about because of being Catholic and the fact that we shouldn't of had sex until we were married.

**Researcher:** With hindsight, do you think the topics associated with the SRE you were given were younger was accurate and correct?

**Mother:** I think there were a lot of myths given then, as there are now. I mean some people were told *'they were not allowed to wash their hair when they were having their period'* and things like that. I was allowed, but there were things like *'don't sit on a public toilet seat or you will get pregnant'* and things like that.

**Researcher:** Yes, I remember that one.

**Mother:** Yes, I mean how ridiculous is that? It was these sorts of things that I think just terrified people and made no sense, but at that age you don't have the knowledge yourself to think any different. It is only when you get older you start to learn more and realise how bizarre times were when you were younger. It is totally mad.

**Researcher:** How did you find out SRE for yourself?

**Mother:** Like I said before I was very inquisitive and read lots of books, but I just never had anyone I could talk to about what I had read, so I suppose I read even more to make sure I was getting the right information.

**Researcher:** Do you think your friends knew more about SRE than yourself?

**Mother:** No, I think we pieced it together as we went along. (laughs).

**Researcher:** Do you think that if the SRE taught to you had been discussed more openly you would feel more comfortable talking to your children about sexual matters?

**Mother:** No, I have never had a problem talking to my kids. I have always been open and honest about everything because I am the type of person who is able to be open and talkative about things.

**Researcher:** Did you learn any SRE from listening to other people conversations?

**Mother:** Yes, definitely. I think everybody does even if they don't admit it.

**Researcher:** What age do you think you were when you felt you had adequate knowledge of SRE topics?

**Mother:** I think possibly about the age of 16 years old I think I knew enough. People were not encouraged to know about contraception and STIs and I suppose looking back that was where I didn't have the most relevant information, but I learnt a lot from this



series of books I found and then trying to pick up from other people when they did talk about sexual issues.

**Researcher:** With hindsight, do you think you knew enough sex education at your different developmental stages to prepare you for adult life?

**Mother:** I don't think I was as prepared as my kids are. I think they know pretty much everything and if they didn't I know they would just ask because we have always talked openly about sex from a very young age. It is almost they have grown-up with it and therefore I think that has curbed a lot of the embarrassment that other kids sometimes have when talking about sexual matters.

**Researcher:** If you look back to the SRE that was taught when you were younger, how do you think it could have been improved to provide you with the information you wanted or needed at the time?

**Mother:** I think it should have been ... I think my parents could have been more open even though I know they will have just known about the basic act when having sex. I mean when my mother comes to help me clean she will say I wonder what lesbians do when they are having sex. I then go on to answer the question and she will say I don't want to know and then she will say other things and I think yes, you knew a lot more than you ever told me, so I suppose if she had talked to me more I think the information I learnt from the books would have giving clarity to what I had learnt and then I think this would have helped me a lot instead of me left wondering or assuming things from what I had read. I also think that it would have been better if sex was discussed in a broader context in that it covered things like relationships, contraception, STIs and even more to do with puberty. I mean I teach my children myself, even though I know they get the basic sex education at school in every aspect. In my home we talk openly about sex and things associated with it. I do not, or will allow for it to be treated as a dirty subject, and I think because my kids are aware of all aspects to do with sex. I think this then allows them to form their own opinions of what they want and who they want to be as people. I know people can say I am maybe too open, but I don't think you can ever be too open about such a serious aspect of life and I suppose even if I had been told half of what they know I would have also been able to make different decisions when I was growing-up.

I remember when my daughter was 16 we spent the day together and she said '*what are we doing today?*' and I said '*we are going to the family planning clinic and you can take as many friends with you as you want*'. I did this because I think it is vitally important that she needed to cover herself as I knew she was on the verge of getting into a heavy relationship. I knew she hadn't had sex because she would have discussed it with me, but I needed to make sure she had thought about all aspects before she got any closer to this lad. They had been seeing each other for a while and he wanted to do and she didn't, but I just wanted to prepare her for whatever was to happen. You see I have always told my kids about the law and that it is illegal to have sex before the age of 16 and I just did not want her to think '*right I am 16 so I can have sex, without actually protecting herself*'. She always knew though where the family planning clinic was because she would come with me if I had to go for a smear or whatever, but I just needed her to know what was there for her encase she needed the services to protect herself.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the SRE that was taught, compared with today's teaching?

I think they tell kids a lot more now than what I got told when I was younger, but I think they still need to be careful how they deliver sex education in that I think it should be taught by someone they are familiar with and where they don't feel embarrassed to ask questions. I know my kids don't get embarrassed and especially not with me. I mean I will say to my sons *'go to the shop and get us some tampons'* and they will just say *'do you want regular or super-plus mam?'* This is how open we are and I know they are not embarrassed to go and buy tampons and I don't think they would be any different if they had to buy condoms if they needed them. I mean I remember one day me and my daughter had both come on at the same time and I asked my youngest son to go to the shop for some tampons and he said *'you haven't used all those that I bought the other day?'* but off he went and then I later found out that they (the son's) were intrigued as to how they work inside the female. So when I was at work one day they had their friends around and were putting tampons in water to see how quickly they swelled up. I know they had a laugh with their friends, but they had a greater awareness of what females go through and why they need to change tampons on a regular basis. So this taught them something they couldn't read in a book or on a leaflet, so I didn't get cross with them for us me and my daughter not having tampons, but they were happy to go to the shop and buy some for us, but they knew about menstruation from an early age because even though they did not need tampons. They would see them laid around in the bathroom and I just told them in the same way as I told my daughter, so they never get embarrassed talking about it because they know this is just the way of life for females at one time throughout the month. I think the tampon experience was good for them because they have an appreciation of what girls go through and that they will get irritable from time to time, but also I think it has took away that need to talk and be smutty towards girls when it is there time for their periods.

I know my daughter has quite a few gay friends and they will come here to visit her, but they also get on well with my sons. I also know because of the time my sons spend around these lesbian and gay men that they know all about homosexuality and the need to use condoms. They were all talking once and one of these gay lads said *'you always need to use a condom, whoever you sleep with'*, so the next day I when we were sat around I threw a condom at them both (her sons) whilst they were watching the television and said *'see if you can get these out the packet without tearing the condom'*. It was all in a joking way, not encouragement of sex or being dirty, but they then grabbed a carrot from the kitchen and joked about with them, then my daughter came in and they laughed further and then we showed them how to put condoms on properly. Even though it was only on a carrot they had the idea and knew how to use them correctly. They even know how to take it out the packet properly, but they don't teach this, especially when they say to kids *'protect yourself'*. How can they if they are not shown? And I think these are important lessons to learn. I mean there maybe onetime in the lust of the moment they have sex and if they don't put the condom on properly or there is a hole in it, that is it and whilst I don't encourage my kids to have sex I do want them prepared so they don't make mistakes and god-forbid may have to pay for the rest of their lives.

**Researcher:** How was sex discussed when you were younger and why do you think it was discussed in this way (i.e. embarrassment)?

**Mother:** All I can say is was taboo subject that was perceived in a dirty way. Not like it is today. Embarrassment didn't even come close to how people felt when talking about a very natural experience of life. Thankfully we have moved on.

**Researcher:** Do you as a parent feel you have the up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach your child about sexual matters?

**Mother:** Yes, I think so, especially compared to some parents I know.

**Researcher:** What sex and relationship education (SRE) has been taught to your children?

**Mother:** Everything. I think now they openly discuss anything and everything to do with sex. I know this because they will come home and tell me things and then ask questions, and so I just add on things based on the knowledge I have. I think it is good that they teach about relationships and sexual relationships, and also about contraception and STIs and more so about what it is like for the different sexes. I must admit I struggle to figure out why there are so many teenage pregnancies with all of the information they get told about at school.

**Researcher:** What size of group was SRE taught in and was is it mixed or single-sex group?

**Mother:** I think that they do mixed classes, and not segregated like it was for me.

**Researcher:** Do you know if signposting was given to say where they could get further information or advice?

**Mother:** I assume that they would have been given things, even though I haven't seen them. They will probably have them put away somewhere upstairs in their bedrooms. So I think yes they have.

**Researcher:** Who has taught SRE to your children (i.e. mother, father, school, etc)?

**Mother:** I think they have had the education at school and I have talked openly about it. I think they also learn from magazines and the Internet. I mean the other day I went on the Internet and went on the drop-down menu and there was this lecbians web-site came up of all these women naked in a pool, so I switched it off and when they (her sons) were sat watching TV later on I said in a casual manner *'Have either of you been on the Internet?'* NO-NO! they replied. I knew they had and I just said *'Okay, by the way just for future reference lads the word lesbian is spelt with an S, and not a C'* and I just walked off, so I know they try and find out things, even if they don't want to necessarily discuss it at that time. Over the next few days I made a joke of it by asking *'what would my porn stars like for tea?'* and they would laugh. I didn't think it was appropriate to make a big thing of it because I don't think they were looked at it in a perverted way, I think they just wanted to know more about what lesbians do. I mean I do have a restriction on the sites they can go onto, but they had gone into my account, which is why they were permitted to access the site.

**Researcher:** Why do you think they prefer to learn about sexual matters from this person (Is it possible due to being the same sex?)?

**Mother:** I don't know if they prefer to use the Internet, I think this was just a one-off out of curiosity and I think if I make it taboo then it may put up barriers for future conversations or when they want to find something out for themselves. I also think this would confuse them, especially as I have always promoted open communication about sexual matters and how I found out about sex. I used books because there was no Internet

then, but if there was I would maybe have used it to find out things based on the curiosity I had in wanting to know about sex and sexual matters.

**Researcher:** At what age was SRE taught to your children and what topics were discussed?

**Mother:** What, by me?

**Researcher:** Yes.

**Mother:** I think from before they went to primary school, they knew the difference between male and female genitals and why women have breasts, but I can't think of any specifics really, but I know with us talking openly about sex and sexual matters the boys would have learnt from a younger age than maybe other boys because they have an older sister and they would have heard us talking. There is seven years difference between her and the eldest son, so I am sure they would have picked things up, but then I know with them being brothers they also educate each other, so I would say from quite a young age really.

**Researcher:** Who initiated the discussion of SRE?

**Mother:** Both, but mainly me I think.

**Researcher:** Was it embarrassing for you as a parent to discuss sexual matters with your children?

**Mother:** No.

**Researcher:** After discussions, what aspects of SRE do you think your children still want to know more about?

**Mother:** I don't think there would have been things because they would have just asked more questions until they did understand. I do have quite inquisitive children (laughs).

**Researcher:** Who would you like to teach your children about sexual matters?

**Mother:** I think me. I don't know if their father has talked to them about sex. You see we split up when I was 6 months pregnant with my youngest son, because I found out my husband was having an affair. Yes he told me he loved me, but I think he loved a few other women as well, but we had two children together and another one on the way, but that is by-the-by. I told him to pack his bags and go. I think people thought I was mad, but I have brought up three children and perused a career, but when I became a nurse I worked two night shifts a week and my boys spent their early stages sat down when they were urinating and there was this one day they came back from their fathers and they had witnessed him standing up to have a wee. So when they came back they then stood up to also urinate, and this fascinated me, because with not having a man around they just copied me. So I suppose he taught them this but I am not sure what else he has told them, but he hasn't seen them in quite a while, so I can only assume he may have mentioned some things, but I think I teach them the most because I am always with them, and not him.

**Researcher:** Why, and what is the reason for this? AS ABOVE

**Researcher:** What sorts of sexual matters do you think your children discuss with their friends?

**Mother:** Pretty much anything, really. I know they look at the 'Nuts' magazine which covers anything and everything and I also know they have accessed gay websites, but I think they will talk about anything to do with sex to their friends, simply because they are all experiencing the same things.

**Researcher:** Are these friends of the same or opposite sex?

**Mother:** I think these days they just have friends of both sexes.

**Researcher:** Why do you think your children want to talk to their friends about sexual matters?

**Mother:** I think probably at their ages it is the '*in-subject*' because of them going through puberty and having sexual feelings, so I think they are talking about it trying to learn more about the topic and trying to find out what is normal at their ages.

**Researcher:** What aspects of SRE do you think they learn more about when talking to their friends?

**Mother:** I think it is more to do with the different feelings that they are having and how to make sense of these. I think sometimes their friends feelings prompt them to question what the norm is and what is the correct way to behave. So I think they don't necessarily learn from their friends about sex as a topic, but more about all the other things to do with relationships, respect and emotions. That is the way I have brought them up though. I may have given them the sexual knowledge from a young age but it has never been given in isolation in that it has excluded the important things that go hand and hand with sex, such as being caring, loving and respectful.

**Researcher:** Which parent mainly talks to their children about sexual matters?

**Mother:** Me.

**Researcher:** Why is it this parent (i.e. factors)?

**Mother:** Because the father is never in their lives.

**Researcher:** Why do you think they prefer to talk to this parent about sexual matters (Is it possible due to being the same sex?)? AS ABOVE.

**Researcher:** Who initiates the conversations regarding sexual matters?

**Mother:** Me and them I think, but probably more me.

**Researcher:** What topics do parents discuss with their children, and at what age and is it different for sons and daughters?

**Mother:** I think I taught them from an early age, but at a level they would understand, but as to what is discussed is based on each child because they are very different and ask very different things, but I suppose the first things that I would teach them about is the differences between boys and girls.

**Researcher:** When and what circumstances are these conversations likely to occur?

**Mother:** Anytime I suppose. I don't think there is a set situation, but meal times is probably the time when most conversations occur.

**Researcher:** What topics do parents NOT discuss with their children?

**Mother:** None.

**Researcher:** Where do you think your child will learn about the sexual matters if you don't teach them?

**Mother:** Probably school or their sister.

**Researcher:** Are there any restrictions on not discussing sexual matters within the family amongst yourselves?

**Mother:** No.

**Researcher:** Do you feel that your family talk openly about sexual matters within the family?

**Mother:** Yes, I think we do. I could possibly be criticised for being too open with my children. Even my friends send their children to talk to me about sexual issues, simply

because I will just say it how it is and I don't get embarrassed and I think because I don't get embarrassed, they don't get embarrassed.

**Researcher:** How do you think other families communicate SRE, compared to yours?

**Mother:** I think my friend's think I am too open with my kids, but my kids are more knowledgeable than some of their peers and their parents have mentioned this when they have heard my kids talking with theirs, but I don't mind that. My friends send their kids to me because they can't talk openly about sex without getting embarrassed and I think that can cause problems in that it stops children being open in their conversations about sex if their parents are like that. Once again leading it back to being a taboo subject. I thought we were getting over that, but sometimes I think parents can make the topic of sex difficult for their children to discuss.

**Researcher:** Do you think in general more sex education is given to female children rather than male children?

**Mother:** I think it is steered more towards the female body because they have period's and are able to have babies, but I have told my son's exactly what I have told my daughter. That's probably why they know so much about females, but I think both boys and girls need to know what it like for each of the sexes to get a greater appreciation of sex, sexual relationships and the bigger picture of what both males and females are experiencing.

**Researcher:** At what age do you want your children to know about sexual matters?

**Mother:** As young as they can understand. I think more of an emphasis needs to be put on sex when they are going to start experiencing the feelings when they go through puberty, but they also need to be prepared for the fact that this is going to happen to them.

**Researcher:** Do the school involve parents in the educating of the children?

**Mother:** No, I know they get sex education, but I don't know when they get it or what sex education is given.

**Researcher:** If no, how do you think the school could improve their approach to involving parents more?

**Mother:** I think we should know what is being told to them and when this occurs, but I don't think parents have a right to say what the school should and should not be allowed to tell children. I think this may cause problems especially with parents who don't want their children knowing about contraception, abortions and things like that. I think children should be told it all, but I also know of parents who object to the amount of sex education I give my children. I am not encouraging them to have sex, but I need to know that if they are in a situation concerning sex that they make the right decisions and do what is right for them at that time. They need to be informed so they can make the right decisions, but I also think parents need to be educated around what children need to know and why it is so important that they are given the facts before an event occurring and not afterwards. There may not be so many teenage pregnancies and STIs if parents were aware of the bigger picture.

**Researcher:** So do you think that as a parent if you knew more about what was being taught and when it is taught that this would strengthen the relationship with you children when discussing sexual matters within the home environment?

**Mother:** Not with me, but I think with a lot of parents it would help.

**Researcher:** What main forms of the media (computers, magazines etc) do your children use to learn about issues regarding SRE?

**Mother:** Internet, magazines and TV, especially.

**Researcher:** What sorts of things do you think they learn from these sources that they do not get taught about elsewhere?

**Mother:** I think everything, in that they see sex, sexual messages and what the norm is. I try and educate them to say it is different for different people, but I think they see everything on videos, soaps and they are seeing what is acceptable behaviour in society, but I would like to think they have got the foundations around sexual issues and not just about sex as an act.

**Researcher:** Do you think they prefer to use these sources to learn about SRE?

**Mother:** I don't know really. I think I have given them the basic information and I have talked to them about everything I think, but I think they are now at that stage where they want to find out more for themselves, which I don't mind about because I know if they read or see something they are not sure of they will ask, so I don't know if they prefer media sources, but it is just the next developmental stage for them to find out more and piece more things together for themselves.

**Researcher:** What impact do you think the media (computers, magazines, etc) have on adolescents regarding the SRE that they learn?

**Mother:** Massive, not just because it is everywhere but because it comes from so many different angles which allows them to learn more.

**Researcher:** Do you think the media act as a deterrent when showing the consequences and negativity associated with some sexual behaviours/issues?

**Mother:** Sometimes, but not enough.

**Researcher:** When your children use the media to learn about sexual matters do you feel they use these because they can relate to what they are being told about?

**Mother:** I think so with what they get at school and what they get here, the media just tops it all of to help them put thing in some sort of context which covers everything really.

**Researcher:** When your children use the media, do you think they learn more about the opposite sex?

**Mother:** I would think so because the media do tend to send the messages to both sexes.

**Researcher:** Do you think your children feel more confident with the knowledge they have learnt from the different media types they view and read?

**Mother:** Yes, definitely I think so because they make young people question things which can only help with self-esteem and confidence levels, so yes.

**Researcher:** Do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing?

**Mother:** A good thing for the many reasons I have said previously.

**Researcher:** Do you think the parent's religion impacts on the SRE they give to their children?

**Mother:** Yes, definitely. I think the way they felt was you were not suppose to be doing it until you were married and therefore you don't need to be told anything about it.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Mother:** Good.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Mother:** The layout is very modern.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Mother:** None, they were all good of what I have seen.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Mother:** Some parts from 10, but then others from 11/ 12 upwards.

**Researcher:** Was there any aspect of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Mother:** No.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Mother:** Not that I saw.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Mother:** Not ours, but others yes.

**Researcher:** As a parent do you feel you could talk openly with your child about all aspects raised within the CD or is there things on the CD you were not aware of as a parent?

**Mother:** No, I think I am aware of all of what I have seen.

**Researcher:** That's great, thank you. May I ask you to complete the post sexual knowledge questionnaire and then I come back in a week from now to interview the family for a brief time just to clarify any points made today and to get your opinions on the multimedia program?

**Mother:** By all means.

**WENT BACK ONE WEEK LATER** and ask questions to the whole family to gain clarity as to how the CD has broken down any barriers when discussing SRE within the family. The mother and her sons were also asked to complete the follow-up sexual knowledge questionnaire to identify if their knowledge had increased through exploring the multimedia program.

### **Interview with Mother**

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Mother:** I thought it was good in that it covered every part near enough of sex education. I mean I think what needs to be remembered is that some young people find the topic area of sex extremely embarrassing and putting a fun slant on sex education is good because it might help in reaching more young people.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Mother:** I thought it was presented in a non-serious way, which helps young people learn. I also thought it was easy to follow.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Mother:** There wasn't anything really.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Mother:** Before puberty begins, so 10 upwards depending on the young person.

**Researcher:** Was there any aspect of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Mother:** No.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Mother:** No.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?



**Mother:** Not ours, but other families then maybe.

**Researcher:** As a parent do you feel you could talk openly with your child about all aspects raised within the CD or is there things on the CD you were not aware of as a parent?

**Mother:** No.

### **Interview with Sons**

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Son 2:** Parts were really funny though.

**Son 1:** Yes, especially some of the scenarios.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Son 1:** It was humorous, which made it you want to watch more sections.

**Son 2:** Yes.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Son 1:** I suppose if anything the fly was a bit annoying, but I didn't notice it the first time when watching the CD, but he would get on my nerves after a while.

**Son 2:** Well I liked him and the whole CD; it was good.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Researcher:** Was there any aspect of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Both sons agree:** No.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Both sons agree:** No.

**Researcher:** Would you prefer to talk to your parents rather than find out about SRE aspects by using the CD?

**Both sons agree:** Talk to mum.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Son 1:** Yes, it would be good as a reference, but we also just talk quite openly in the family, so it might not get used.

**Researcher:** After your parents have watched the CD do you feel they would be able to talk more openly with you about all aspects raised within the CD or is there things on the CD they will not be aware of as a parent?

**Son 1:** Maybe.

Mum just comes out with things anyway, but I am sure she will mention things from the CD.

Researcher: The family were given a de-brief of the study and thanked for their time.

**End of Interview.**

## 16<sup>th</sup> Family Interview - Stage II

**Participants:** Female parent (35 years), daughter (15 years), son and father absent.

**Consent form signed and retained by the family and researcher.**

**Researcher:** Thank you. I would also like to ask if it is possible for either one of you to leave the room so I could do the first interview. Mother and daughter decided that the daughter should be interviewed first. The mother was asked to take the demographics form and the sexual knowledge questionnaire to be completed. The researcher asked the daughter to complete the demographic form and the sexual knowledge questionnaire and the interview started by asking the daughter the following questions:

### Interview with daughter

**Researcher:** What sex and relationship education (SRE) has been taught to you?

**Daughter:** Not a lot really. We only had it in year 8 (12-13 years). It was just that once and it was quite rushed.

**Researcher:** And what did it cover?

**Daughter:** Basically what sex was, puberty, contraception and STIs. We also got given a book at the back end of year 6 (11 years) which covered periods, but that was all.

**Researcher:** What size of group is SRE taught in and is it mixed or single-sex?

**Daughter:** It was mixed sex for both of the sessions.

**Researcher:** Is this an ideal setting or would you prefer different sizes of groups and gender when being taught SRE? If different, how?

**Daughter:** I don't mind that it was boys and girls together, but it could have been better by giving us more information.

**Researcher:** Was signposting given to say where you get further information or advice?

**Daughter:** Yes, they gave us leaflets that told us about sex and where to go for contraception at the local family planning clinic. They gave us a little book that told us things in more detail than they had told us.

**Researcher:** Who has taught you the most about the SRE (i.e. mother, father, school, etc)?

**Daughter:** My mum.

**Researcher:** Why do you prefer to talk to this person about sex (Is it possible due to being the same sex?)?

**Daughter:** My mum.

**Researcher:** At what age was SRE first taught and what topics were discussed?

**Daughter:** I think I was about 11 or 12 when we talked about it seriously. When I was younger I was quite chubby and she (her mother) talked to me about my figure and what happens when I go through puberty. We also talked about periods, sex, contraception and STIs, basically everything.

**Researcher:** Who initiated the discussion of SRE?

**Daughter:** I don't really remember who mentioned it first. It just came up in conversation really and then we have just carried it on from there. I will ask her things and she will mention things to me, so I suppose we both start the conversations.

**Researcher:** If the parent, why do you think they told you about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** Because she wants me to know and be prepared for what is going to happen to me. I suppose she just doesn't want me to be scared.

**Researcher:** Was it embarrassing to discuss sexual matters?

**Daughter:** Not really. In the beginning I suppose it was a strange conversation to have, but I don't get embarrassed talking about sexual matters.

**Researcher:** What topics are embarrassing to talk about (e.g. relationships)?

**Daughter:** Just about sex and boys. I think it was because I wasn't into boys that much so it was hard making that link.

**Researcher:** Why do you get embarrassed talking about these topics?

**Daughter:** I don't now, but when it first came up I just didn't like the thought of doing anything with boys at the age of 11, so it was a bit weird talking about it, but that was just in the first five minutes, but then it was okay.

**Researcher:** After discussions, what aspects of SRE did you still want to know more about?

**Daughter:** No.

**Researcher:** Who would you like to teach you about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** My mum.

**Researcher:** Why, what is the reason for this?

**Daughter:** I think it is because we are really close and we can talk about anything. I trust her as well and know what we talk about is private and just between me and her.

**Researcher:** Do you think that your pick things up from other peoples conversations regarding SRE?

**Daughter:** Yes, I would say I would pick things up from my friends, especially about boys because they started dating before me.

**Researcher:** What sorts of sexual matters do you discuss with friends?

**Daughter:** Everything really.

**Researcher:** Are these friends of the same or opposite sex?

**Daughter:** Both. I have a male friend who I can talk to about anything, but I also have lots of other friends who I talk to about things.

**Researcher:** What makes you want to talk to your friends about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** I don't know, I think it is because they know things. I know my mum does as well, but my friends are from my generating so I think we can relate a lot more to what each of us are on about and how things are now.

**Researcher:** What aspects of SRE do you learn more about when talking to friends?

**Daughter:** I don't know if I learn anything, it is more about when we are gossiping we will pick things up from what other people are doing.

**Researcher:** Are there things that you would discuss with your friends that you would not discuss with your parents?

**Daughter:** No, I would discuss anything with my mum.

**Researcher:** Do you think that your friends know more about SRE matters than you do?

**Daughter:** No, I don't think they know more than me. I think I might know a bit more through talking to my mum because she knows things and she has that wisdom as well.

**Researcher:** Which parent do you mainly talk to about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** My mum.

**Researcher:** Why is it this parent (i.e. factors)?

**Daughter:** Because I am close to her and she has a good idea of what I am experiencing with being a female herself.

**Researcher:** Why do you think the mum teaches the most about SRE, rather than your father?

**Daughter:** I think she wants to keep me safe and wants me to know things so I can make the best decisions if I was in a sexual relationship.

**Researcher:** Why do you prefer to talk to this parent about sexual matters (Is it possible due to being the same sex?)?

**Daughter:** Like I said she is understanding, caring and knows what I am going through. She is just my mum.

**Researcher:** Would you prefer to discuss sexual matters with your other parent instead or as well?

**Daughter:** No, I don't talk to my dad about things like I talk to my mum. I know I could talk to him, but I don't think he or I would feel comfortable talking about the things I talk about with my mum. He is old, well in his forty's, so I don't think he would be understanding like my mum is. He knows I have started my period, but I wouldn't talk to him about boys, even though he is a male. It is just a no-go-area.

**Researcher:** Who initiates the conversations regarding sexual matters?

**Daughter:** Both me and her.

**Researcher:** What SRE topics have your parents discuss with you, and at what age did these conversations occur?

**Daughter:** I suppose I have mainly talked to my mum about everything from about the age of 10/11 something like that, but I haven't talked to my dad about sex. He knows I have a boyfriend and that I have started my period a while ago, but he doesn't know much more than that.

**Researcher:** When and what circumstances are these conversations likely to occur?

**Daughter:** I don't think there is set times that me and my mum talk about things. We tend to talk about sex just in conversation at any time. We sometimes talk about certain things if we are watching '*Trisha*' (chat-show) or things like that.

**Researcher:** What topics do your parents NOT discuss with you concerning SRE?

**Daughter:** If the topic of sex came up with my dad I suppose we would talk about it, but I am not sure and I think he would also get embarrassed. I know with my mum I can just talk to her about everything, so there is nothing I wouldn't talk to her about, but with my dad I am not sure.

**Researcher:** Why do you think your parents omit these topics regarding sexual matters (i.e. embarrassment?)?

**Daughter:** I don't know, but I suppose with me only seeing my dad on some weekends we just don't have the chats that I have with my mum, because she is always around me.

**Researcher:** Where do you think you will learn about the sexual matters if your parent's don't teach you?

**Daughter:** I think of my aunties or my cousins because I am quite close to them.

**Researcher:** Do you think your parent's have the most up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach you about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** Yes, and if she didn't know something she would ask her best friends who knows it all because she works for the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy in Hartlepool.

**Researcher:** Are there any restrictions on not discussing sexual matters within the family amongst yourselves?

**Daughter:** Sometimes it is difficult with my little sister being around.

**Researcher:** How do you overcome these restrictions placed on the family when discussing sexual matters?

**Daughter:** We just talk later when she has gone to bed.

**Researcher:** Do you feel that your family talk openly about sexual matters within the family?

**Daughter:** Yes, I think me and my mum are very open because we talk about everything, but I also talk to some of my aunts who I am also really close to, so I suppose as a family we do, yes.

**Researcher:** How do you think other families communicate SRE, compared to yours?

**Daughter:** I don't think all of my friends talk openly with their parents, but I have some who do talk to their mum, but I don't know of any who talk to their dads.

**Researcher:** Do you think in general more sex education is given to female children rather than male children?

**Daughter:** Yes, because dads don't really talk to their sons about it and mums don't talk as much to their sons about sex compared to their daughters. I think that is just because mums don't know what males go through as much as they know what females go through, so they can talk about it more with their daughters.

**Researcher:** Some young males sometimes feel that fewer SRE matters are discussed with young females, but do you agree?

**Daughter:** Not at school because we all get sex education together, but I don't think they get as much sex education at home, just because of what I said before.

**Researcher:** If yes, why do you think this is? AS ABOVE

**Researcher:** At what age do you think your parents want you to know about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** About the time when you are starting your periods.

**Researcher:** Do the school involve your parents in the SRE you receive?

**Daughter:** No, not that I know of.

**Researcher:** Do you want your parents to have more involvement in the SRE you receive in school?

**Daughter:** Yes, because my mum would also be aware of when we get sex education. I told her though when I had it and she just told me more.

**Researcher:** Would you prefer for sexual matters to be discussed more openly within the family?

**Daughter:** I think we do already, definitely with my mum.

**Researcher:** Would you have been as open answering these questions if your parent/s had been present?

**Daughter:** Yes.

**Researcher:** If yes, why?

**Daughter:** Because she knows everything I have said throughout this interview.

**Researcher:** What main forms of the media (computers, magazines etc) do you use to learn about issues regarding SRE?

**Daughter:** Magazines and problem pages. I also watch soaps and talk shows like 'Trisha' which covers quite a lot to do with sex and relationships.

**Researcher:** What sorts of things do you learn from these sources that you do not get taught about elsewhere?

**Daughter:** Just what other people are experiencing really.

**Researcher:** Do you prefer to use these sources to learn about SRE?

**Daughter:** No, just talk to my mum.

**Researcher:** What impact do you think the media (computers, magazines, etc) has regarding the SRE that you learn?

**Daughter:** Everything in the media is about sex. You see people in little clothes and in magazines they talk about the top ten ways to have good sex and things like that. So I suppose anything you want to know is just out there and you can't help but learn about things to do with sex. I think also when my mum talks about sex in her day, nobody talked about it, but now everybody is talking about it and they are really open in what they say, where it sounds like when my mum was younger it was a no-go-area.

**Researcher:** Do you think the media act as a deterrent when showing the consequences and negativity associated with some sexual behaviours/issues?

**Daughter:** Yes.

**Researcher:** When reading magazines, watching TV, videos and other media types do you feel that you can relate to what you are reading about or watching?

**Daughter:** Yes.

**Researcher:** When using the media to learn about SRE do you feel you learn more about the opposite sex?

**Daughter:** Yes, as much I know about me I know about boys just through my mum talking about them and they are on the chat shows. I think as well because I have friends who are boys I learn a lot of what it is like for them, just when we are talking.

**Researcher:** Do you feel more confident with the knowledge you have learnt when using the different media types?

**Daughter:** Yes, I know what I am doing and why I am doing it.

**Researcher:** Do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing?

**Daughter:** It can be a good thing in that it gives you all the information to do with sex, but it can also be a bad thing in that it promotes sex by giving too much information at times, especially to really young people who might want to try sex because they think it is clever and grown-up.

**Researcher:** Do you think the religious beliefs you have been brought up with influences the SRE you receive?

**Daughter:** Yes. I think if you are Muslim or another religion you get told not to have sex until you are married, so there is different messages. I also think that if you are part of a strict religion you don't get as much sex education given, because of the different beliefs.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Daughter:** I liked the look of it, but the sound wasn't working very well on our computer because the better speakers are at my dads.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Daughter:** From what I saw I thought it was very modern.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Daughter:** I don't know yet until I go through it fully.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Daughter:** I don't know until I watch more, but the sections covered lots of topics such as contraception, so it is probably for my age and a bit younger.

**Researcher:** Was there any aspect of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Daughter:** No, I think me and my mum have covered the topics that I saw.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Daughter:** No, I don't think so.

**Researcher:** Would you prefer to talk to your parents rather than find out about SRE aspects by using the CD?

**Daughter:** No, I always prefer to talk to my mum.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Daughter:** Yes, for some families who can't talk about things.

**Researcher:** After you have watched the CD do you feel you would be able to talk more openly with your parents about all aspects raised within the CD?

**Daughter:** No, just the same.

The daughter was thanked for her time and asked to complete the post sexual knowledge questionnaire. The mother was then interviewed and the following questions were asked:

### **Interview with Mother**

**Researcher:** What sex and relationship education (SRE) was taught to you as parents when you were younger?

**Mother:** In school we had a couple sessions that covered the body parts, what the organs did and we also got told about periods, but that was it all.

**Researcher:** Which of your parents taught you about sexual matters, and why do you think it was this parent?

**Mother:** Neither, ever. It was just never talked about.

**Researcher:** Did your own parents ever comment on the sex education that they received when they were younger?

**Mother:** No.

**Researcher:** With hindsight, do you think your parents had sufficient knowledge to teach you about sexual matters?

**Mother:** No.

**Researcher:** Do you feel your family talked openly about sexual matters when you were younger?

**Mother:** No, never.

**Researcher:** If no, why do you think sexual matters were not discussed more openly within your family when you were younger?

**Mother:** I think it was taboo. Sex was between a married couple. I think that they wouldn't have a clue about STIs, contraceptives and things like that. I think the thing with my family is that my mum started seeing my father, got pregnant, he was Catholic and so they got married and that was the end of that. I don't believe they had any sex education and I think I know more than they do. I was never spoken to about sex and you would never show flesh, you always had to be covered up. I mean we are going on holiday with them in a couple of weeks, but I don't know if I will be able to wear a bikini

in front of them. That's just the way my family is. I think as well with me being the eldest of four, my parents didn't know how to talk to me about sex. I know it sounds silly, but there was always this message that it was dirty, not dirty maybe, but just not acceptable behaviour. I mean I fell pregnant with my daughter when I was 18 and gave birth when I was 19. Her father was my first sexual partner and when we went to tell my parents, they were like right, you need to get married because having a child out of wedlock was unheard of. They fell pregnant with me before they were married, but they got married and brought up this family in a very traditional way, but because I did not feel marriage was necessary to have a child, they disowned me. I think as well what didn't help was that my partner was a black man and this also went against the norm. They gave me an ultimatum and said about black people and white people do not mix and that it was never to work out. I disagreed and I had a second child to the same man. We split up a year ago nearly, but we had been together for 15/16 years and we have had two wonderful girls together, but they are black and this doesn't go down well with my parents. They don't really have anything to do with my children and I think it is down to the colour of their skin. I mean I always remember when I got kicked out when I first fell pregnant and my mum had arranged for me to meet my nana at the part at Middlesbrough and we talked and she said to me even then *'All I can say to you is that black and white people don't work. Black people stay with black people and white people stay with white people and that is just the way it is'*. But I said *'Why?'* and she just said *'That is the way it is and you can't change it'*. So looking back I had a racist family, who stuck by a very strict Catholic religion because of my dad and I just didn't fit-in to there ways, so I paid the price and they had nothing to do with me for a long-time, but it does hurt me the way they treat my children, compared to their other grand-children. I also think looking back I fell pregnant because I was very inexperienced, very un-knowlegeable about sex and anything to do with it and I even remember starting my period and really thinking I am dying. What is happening here? But there was nobody who would talk to me about it or anything to do with sex and development.

**Researcher:** Who taught you the most about SRE matters (i.e. mother, father, school, etc)?

**Mother:** Everything I have learnt about sex has come from my children's father who I had been with for fourteen years.

**Researcher:** At what age was SRE taught and what topics were discussed?

**Mother:** When I was eighteen.

**Researcher:** How and in what context was SRE taught?

**Mother:** By participating in the relationship.

**Researcher:** Were there any aspects of SRE that you still wanted to know more about?

**Mother:** Yes, I think he taught me a lot.

**Researcher:** What aspects of SRE do you remember still wanting to know more about?

**Mother:** Yes, I suppose because he will have only taught me things that he had experienced from a male perspective. But, I suppose I didn't know what I needed to know. I mean I have always found out things after the event in that I fell pregnant and then I learnt about sex; I have a baby and then I use contraception. I did put myself on the pill when I was 18, but it was too late because I was already pregnant. It sounds silly I know, but one of your questions was if I had had better sex education, would I have made different choices with my life. I am not sure, I think I would still have had the children,



but I think I would maybe have chosen a different time to have them. I am not saying I live with regrets because I don't, but looking back I would have been able to maybe offer them better if I had been older, especially when having my first. I feel they have missed out because of choices I have made. What I mean by this is the way they have missed out on not really having my family around them when growing-up.

**Researcher:** With hindsight, do you think the topics associated with the SRE you were given were younger was accurate and correct?

**Mother:** Yes, I think they were but I just didn't know all that I needed to know.

**Researcher:** How did you find out SRE for yourself?

**Mother:** I didn't, really. I suppose I would just listen to friends and their experiences. I think also when I got older and in my twenties I had an older set of friends and they would tell me things from a female perspective.

**Researcher:** If through friends, do you think they knew much more than you?

**Mother:** Yes, I do because I think I knew so little, and they had far more knowledge and understanding of sex than I had.

**Researcher:** Did you learn any SRE from listening to other people conversations?

**Mother:** Yes, that was the main way I picked things up.

**Researcher:** What age do you think you were when you felt you had adequate knowledge of SRE topics?

**Mother:** I think I am still leaning about things. I think I would say through my partner, friends and things I had read I knew pretty much everything or was more confident in my knowledge when I was about 28 or maybe a bit younger, but definitely in my late twenties.

**Researcher:** With hindsight, do you think you knew enough sex education at your different developmental stages to prepare you for adult life?

**Mother:** No.

**Researcher:** If you look back to the SRE that was taught when you were younger, how do you think it could have been improved to provide you with the information you wanted or needed at the time?

**Mother:** I don't think it could at the time because it was just so taboo. But anything would have been better than what I got. The sex education I had was so poor and it never covered all the things to do with sex, relationships and everything that goes with it.

**Researcher:** Would you have preferred for SRE matters to have been discussed more openly within the family when you were younger?

**Mother:** I think I would have liked a bit more knowledge from my mum, but we didn't have the type of relationship where we discussed things. I mean my dad would sit very quietly and my mum would do the woman thing by cleaning and cooking, but we never really talked openly about many things. I mean even now if I say something to my dad he will use the least amount of words to respond, but that is just the way my family were and still are to a certain degree.

**Researcher:** Do you think that if the SRE taught to you had been discussed more openly you would feel more comfortable talking to your children about sexual matters?

**Mother:** I think it is the case of you always try and give your kids the things you never got. I know how it affected me not having proper sex education and I want better for my girls.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the SRE that was taught, compared with today's teaching?

**Mother:** I don't know because I don't really know what has been totally taught to my oldest daughter. I have never seen the school SRE policy, but she has mentioned odd things to do with sex that I know must have been brought up at school, but I think because I tell her a lot and talk to her about many things we have more of a close relationship in that we will talk about things she may of heard and is unclear about. I have heard a lot about what they do in schools from my friend who works for the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy, but I don't know what they do at King's Manor school where she goes.

**Researcher:** How was sex discussed when you were younger and why do you think it was discussed in this way (i.e. embarrassment?)?

**Mother:** I think now there is a change in society and in my family it was a taboo subject. You didn't discuss it and back then if you slept with someone that was your partner for life and I think if I hadn't been brought up with those firm beliefs I wouldn't have stopped with their dad for as long as I did. I think also it was a very embarrassing subject for parents to discuss with their children. My parents would not have known how to talk to me about sex, but I think they got better with my younger sister because society had changed in the 10 years age difference between us.

**Researcher:** Do you as a parent feel you have the up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach your child about sexual matters?

**Mother:** I do now, simply because I wanted her to know more than I did when I was younger.

**Researcher:** What sex and relationship education (SRE) has been taught to your children?

**Mother:** I don't know.

**Researcher:** What size of group was SRE taught in and was is it mixed or single-sex group?

**Mother:** I think at a guess it is mixed, but I couldn't be sure.

**Researcher:** Do you know if signposting was given to say where they could get further information or advice?

**Mother:** No.

**Researcher:** Who has taught SRE to your children (i.e. mother, father, school, etc)?

**Mother:** Me.

**Researcher:** Why do you think they prefer to learn about sexual matters from this person (Is it possible due to being the same sex?)?

**Mother:** I don't know if she prefers to know about sex from me, but I have always encouraged and reinforced that if she needs to know something to come to me and ask because there are a lot of messages sent to young people these days that are just not true. I know this in the questions she sometimes asks based on what her friends have told her.

**Researcher:** At what age was SRE taught to your children and what topics were discussed?

**Mother:** I think from a young age, maybe 10 we have talked about sex. We will have talked about things on a gentle note before that time such as periods and body changes but I remember when she was 12 she had brought two friends home and they were talking about a girl that had had sex at their school and I started talking to them about condoms

and protecting themselves and then I mentioned the morning after pill, and she was *'mum, we don't need to know about that'* and I just said *'well maybe you don't, but you can tell your friends because it sounds like this girl needs to be responsible if she is having sex'*. When I walked away I could still hear them talking about what I said, but I don't know how her friends parents would feel if they knew what I said, but that is sometimes how we discuss sex, very un-planned and spontaneous.

**Researcher:** Who initiated the discussion of SRE?

**Mother:** Me, mostly.

**Researcher:** Was it embarrassing for you as a parent to discuss sexual matters with your child?

**Mother:** No.

**Researcher:** After discussions, what aspects of SRE do you think your children still wanted to know more about?

**Mother:** I think I have gone over all things to do with sex, but we are still discussing feelings, emotions and sexual relationships. I know she has a boyfriend so these things are now starting to be discussed, even though I know she hasn't had sex with him because she has told me she is not ready for that yet, and neither is he. So I know they have discussed it, but are waiting until they are both ready.

**Researcher:** Who would you like to teach your children about sexual matters?

**Mother:** Anybody and everybody. I would like it to be me, but if somebody else can tell her something that I don't know, then I welcome that.

**Researcher:** What sorts of sexual matters do you think your children discuss with their friends?

**Mother:** I am not quite sure. I am sure boys and relationships are a top topic to talk about at her age, but I am not really sure what she will discuss.

**Researcher:** Are these friends of the same or opposite sex?

**Mother:** I think both. I know she went swimming the other day with her boyfriend and two other males who are friends to both of them, so I think she has a mixture of both male and female friends.

**Researcher:** Why do you think your children want to talk to their friends about sexual matters?

**Mother:** I think just for confirmation that what she knows is true and correct.

**Researcher:** What aspects of SRE do you think they learn more about when talking to their friends?

**Mother:** What it is like from each of their perspectives.

**Researcher:** Do you think your child will discuss some sexual matters with her friends that they would not talk to you about?

**Mother:** Yes, more than likely.

**Researcher:** If yes, why and what sorts of things do you think they discuss?

**Mother:** Like I said before, probably boys, feelings and relationships.

**Researcher:** Which parent mainly talks to their children about sexual matters?

**Mother:** Me.

**Researcher:** Why is it this parent (i.e. factors)?

**Mother:** Probably because we are both female. I think also because I am her main parent with her living with me and not her dad, so I am sure that might have something to do with it as well.

**Researcher:** If Mother – why do you think the mum teaches the most about SRE, rather than her father?

**Mother:** Simply because I spend more time with the children with their dad not living with us.

**Researcher:** Why do you think they prefer to talk to this parent about sexual matters (Is it possible due to being the same sex?)?

**Mother:** I think because we are closer than she is with her dad, because we are both females and I don't think she gets embarrassed talking to me about things like she would her dad. I also don't think she has the same sort of relationship with her dad that she has with me. He has a different attitude to things than I do. For example, I know she smokes and she knows I disapprove and whilst I am pointing out all the negatives and how it affects her health, he is saying to me *'If she is going to smoke, she is going to smoke and there is nothing you can do about it'*. This is the sort of attitude he has, but he doesn't seem to steer her in a positive direction like I do. I think she is quite street-wise and I think she gets that from him and then she will get the sensible side from me, but I think if she did mention anything sexual to her dad he would just say *'I am going to bray you'*, because he doesn't have the talking ability to sit and talk to her about things.

**Researcher:** Who initiates the conversations regarding sexual matters?

**Mother:** Me mainly, but she also asks things.

**Researcher:** What topics do parents discuss with their children, and at what age and is it different for sons and daughters?

**Mother:** I can't really remember what age I first had a conversation with my eldest about sexual issues, but I know she was young. My infant daughter and I have already talked about puberty aspects, so I sure I did it with her eldest sister also at a young age, because I believe they need to know these things from a young age so they get a good understanding as they develop physically and emotionally.

**Researcher:** When and what circumstances are these conversations likely to occur?

**Mother:** Anytime, I don't think there are set times we talk about anything, it is just when she feels like it or when I think she needs to be knowing something.

**Researcher:** What topics do parents NOT discuss with their children?

**Mother:** I don't say we don't discuss it, but I feel I do not have enough knowledge about STIs, HIV/AIDS. We do discuss it, but I feel I only know bits, so I am not able to tell her everything she possibly needs to know.

**Researcher:** Why do parents omit these topics regarding sexual matters (i.e. embarrassment?)?

**Mother:** I don't shy away from discussing it, but the conversation doesn't seem to last for long because I don't know that much to tell her.

**Researcher:** Where do you think your child will learn about the sexual matters if you don't teach them?

**Mother:** Friends and maybe my younger sister.

**Researcher:** Are there any restrictions on not discussing sexual matters within the family amongst yourselves?

**Mother:** No, I mean we are quite open with my youngest daughter in the fact of puberty because she has asked about changes to the body and we have already discuss boobys, tuppensies and tails and the changes that will happen when she gets older. I remember the other day she said to her older sister *'why do you buttons stick out when you don't wear*

*clothes?* Which was funny, but we told her why and she understands really well for her age. I also remember not so long ago I took my youngest down the town and I was looking in the health food shop and there was this male dummy in the window without any clothes on and she said *'That man should put some clothes on because you can see where his tail is'*. I was really proud of her for saying something so clever, but this older man was stood next to us when she said it and he was so disgusted. He looked at me like I was a bad parent for what I taught my daughter, but that's the old school because this man was probably in his fifty's.

**Researcher:** Do you feel that your family talk openly about sexual matters within the family?

**Mother:** Yes.

**Researcher:** How do you think other families communicate SRE, compared to yours?

**Mother:** I don't think they are as open as we are based on what my eldest daughter has told me, but I think I tell her a lot and then she tells her friends.

**Researcher:** Do you think in general more sex education is given to female children rather than male children?

**Mother:** In the family, yes. I think parents may talk to female children more about protective issues just simply because they are the ones that would become pregnant and that they have periods as well. These subjects can't be avoided for females.

**Researcher:** If yes, why do you think this is? AS ABOVE.

**Researcher:** At what age do you want your children to know about sexual matters?

**Mother:** As young as possible. As soon as they start asking, parents need to start telling.

**Researcher:** Do the school involve parents in the educating of the children?

**Mother:** No, they haven't ever sent anything home or contacted me about anything. I know she gets sex education, because she gets it from me.

**Researcher:** If no, how do you think the school could improve their approach to involving parents more?

**Mother:** Just by telling us what they are teaching in the curriculum and when they are teaching it.

**Researcher:** So do you think that as a parent if you knew more about what was being taught and when it is taught that this would strengthen the relationship with you children when discussing sexual matters within the home environment?

**Mother:** Yes, because they may bring up things that we haven't covered, but if I knew what it was they were telling her then I would approach the subject at home when we are having our chats.

**Researcher:** What main forms of the media (computers, magazines etc) do your child/ren use to learn about issues regarding SRE?

**Mother:** She reads magazines to do with problem pages and relationships. She also watches lots of TV programmes.

**Researcher:** What sorts of things do you think they learn from these sources that they do not get taught about elsewhere?

**Mother:** Individualism. I think she learns that not everybody is the same, but that's okay to be different as well.

**Researcher:** Do you think they prefer to use these sources to learn about SRE?

**Mother:** I think it is a combination of talking to me, her friends and watching TV.

**Researcher:** If so, why?

**Mother:** I think so she can get a bigger picture of all the information that is being told to her.

**Researcher:** What impact do you think the media (computers, magazines, etc) have on adolescents regarding the SRE that they learn?

**Mother:** Massive, it impacts greatly on what they learn because it comes from so many perspectives.

**Researcher:** Do you think the media act as a deterrent when showing the consequences and negativity associated with some sexual behaviours/issues?

**Mother:** Sometimes, but they also glorify some aspects of taking part in bad sexual relationships.

**Researcher:** When your children use the media to learn about sexual matters do you feel they use these because they can relate to what they are being told about?

**Mother:** Yes, but on a very personal note.

**Researcher:** When your children use the media, do you think they learn more about the opposite sex?

**Mother:** Yes.

**Mother:** Yes and I think they learn more about the different sexualities and what it is like to be gay.

**Researcher:** Do you think your children feel more confident with the knowledge they have learnt from the different media types they view and read?

**Researcher:** Do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing?

**Mother:** I think it can be a good thing if the correct messages are reinforced, but a bad thing if young people are not told about what is right and what is wrong.

**Researcher:** Do you think the parent's religion impacts on the SRE they give to their children?

**Mother:** Yes, definitely. I mean I was brought up in a house where my dad and his family had very strict Catholic views, but my mum wasn't Catholic, she was a Christian. The norm was though was that you followed the views, beliefs and wishes of the head of the household and that was my dad. So even though we were not a Catholic family, we still had the Catholic influence and I know how that impacted upon the sex education I received. My mum fought some of the views of my father, but his voice was always the loudest. But I always remember when I moved here and I wanted my eldest daughter to go to St Josephs RC school, but she hadn't been baptised, so I took her to the local Catholic church and my mum was there and I always remember the priest saying in a strict Irish accent *'Do you not think it is a little bit late getting her baptised at 5 years old?'* and my mum just turned to me and said *'See what I mean about Catholics, they are just so judgemental'*.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Mother:** It looks good, but I couldn't hear a lot of the content because of not having speakers.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Mother:** I like the set-up, it looks really good and modern.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Mother:** I don't know without watching the whole CD.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Mother:** It looks very young and the topics seem to hit many age groups, but I would say for the puberty about 9 years old, but then leave the other stuff on sexual relationships until later.

**Researcher:** Was there any aspect of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Mother:** I don't think there would be because we have talked about all of the topics highlighted.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Mother:** No, we haven't discussed gay's too much simply because I don't know what it is like from a gay perspective and I don't have any friends who are gay, but that may be one topic we haven't discussed in great detail.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Mother:** For some families, yes.

**Researcher:** As a parent do you feel you could talk openly with your child about all aspects raised within the CD or is there things on the CD you were not aware of as a parent?

**Mother:** I think everything helps, but I don't know how much of a difference it would make on how we already communicate without watching more of the CD.

The mother and daughter were asked to complete the follow-up sexual knowledge questionnaire and a week later the researcher returned to ask the following questions to gain clarity as to how the CD has broken down any barriers when discussing SRE within the family.

### **Interview with Daughter**

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Daughter:** I thought it was good, especially the fly because he makes it fun.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Daughter:** I liked the way it gave bits of information about relationships and the way it is different for different people in that it gave different scenarios showing you it from different angles about how people feel and the difficulties they have when meeting or fancying someone.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Daughter:** It is not that I didn't like it, I think it would have been better if there was a way you could plug questions in and get the answers that are to do with what you want to know. I know it had the buzzwords that gives facts, but it would be better if it could be more personal to what you want to know more about.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Daughter:** From about 12 upwards.

**Researcher:** Was there any aspect of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Daughter:** No.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Daughter:** Yes, I suppose we haven't talked to much about what it is like for boys. This is probably because neither of us know what it is like for them.

**Researcher:** Would you prefer to talk to your parents rather than find out about SRE aspects by using the CD?

**Daughter:** No, I would prefer to talk to my mum about things.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Daughter:** Yes, but I don't think it should be shown too young or otherwise more young people will start to have sex, because they have that information. It is like if you tell them too soon they will want to try it to see what it is like.

### **Interview with mother**

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Mother:** I think it was really good. The more sections you go through the better it gets.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Mother:** I liked every aspect of it, but I think it was really good in that it was like a soap opera when showing you the different situations young people can find themselves in.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Mother:** There was none, I thought it was all good and it was set out really professionally.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Mother:** I think from even before children go to secondary school, especially the puberty and periods. I mean my youngest knows about aspects of puberty that are mentioned on the CD, but before she goes to secondary school she needs to be knowing a lot more.

**Researcher:** Was there any aspect of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Mother:** No.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Mother:** Yes, I suppose we haven't covered sexual fantasies because I think that is invasion on her privacy. If she wants to tell me she can, but we talk mainly about facts and emotions.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Researcher:** As a parent do you feel you could talk openly with your child about all aspects raised within the CD or is there things on the CD you were not aware of as a parent?

**Mother:** I think it may give her an idea of different types of questions to ask me. For all we have talked about many things in a very open manner, I think she will have seen things on there especially to do with relationships that she will have learnt and wants to know more about. This CD has come at a really good time as well because her boyfriend is going off to America for three months, so I think after watching the CD she will question what is happening in her life and how she feels. I think more for other families the CD would be useful as an ice-breaker and to find out what knowledge the child has got. I mean there is no point in talking about fantasies if they don't know what puberty is, if you know what I mean.

The mother and daughter were thanked for their time and given a de-brief of the research.

**End of Interview.**



## 17<sup>th</sup> Family Interview - Stage II

**Participants:** Female parent (35 years), son (14 years) and son absent father.

**Consent form signed and retained by the family and researcher.**

**Researcher:** Thank you. I would also like to ask if it is possible for either one of you to leave the room so I could do the first interview.

Mother and son decided that the son should be interviewed first. The mother was then asked to take the demographics form and the sexual knowledge questionnaire. The researcher and the son went to another room in the house. The researcher asked the son to complete the demographics form and the sexual knowledge questionnaire before starting the interview whereby the following questions were asked.

### Interview with son

**Researcher:** What sex and relationship education (SRE) has been taught to you?

**Son:** Well, my mum has talked to me a bit. At school we also had people come in to do a roadshow last year, but then we also have sex education in tutorial, but it was rushed and we didn't get it finished because we had outside visitors come in for another topic. The roadshow was good when we went around in small groups and they talked to us about sex, contraception and the diseases you could get as well.

**Researcher:** What size of group is SRE taught in and is it mixed or single-sex?

**Son:** At the roadshow we were in groups of five, but we had a sex education performance last year as well and this was given by year group, so there would have been about 250 boys and girls together in the theatre at school.

**Researcher:** Is this an ideal setting or would you prefer different sizes of groups and gender when being taught SRE? If different, how?

**Son:** No, I don't take much notice of the girls being there; it doesn't bother me.

**Researcher:** Was signposting given to say where you get further information or advice?

**Son:** No, I don't think so. We just got taught it on the days when we were at school, but we didn't get anything to take away.

**Researcher:** Do you know where to go for contraceptive and sexual health advice?

**Son:** Yes, I think so.

**Researcher:** Who has taught you the most about the SRE (i.e. mother, father, school, etc)?

**Son:** I think my mum has talked to me a bit about it, but the roadshow also taught me a lot.

**Researcher:** Why do you prefer to talk to this person about sex (Is it possible due to being the same sex?)?

**Son:** If I am honest, my dad because he was a boy and knows what I am experiencing. I see him on a Wednesday and Friday night and we talk then because we play football together.

**Researcher:** Can I ask you though why you prefer to talk to your dad?

**Son:** Because it is a lad thing. It is a bit embarrassing to talk to your mum, but with your dad it is different because he has been a lad and knows what I am feeling.

**Researcher:** At what age was SRE first taught and what topics were discussed?

**Son:** I think when I was just turned 13.

**Researcher:** Who initiated the discussion of SRE?

**Son:** Well, I think I started getting girlfriends and he said *'I think we need to have a little talk'*. Then after that I think we both asked questions.

**Researcher:** If the parent, why do you think they told you about sexual matters?

**Son:** Just so I don't make mistakes, like he had probably made. He probably just wants to protect me and make sure I don't get tied down until I am ready.

**Researcher:** Was it embarrassing to discuss sexual matters?

**Son:** No, not with my dad, but it can be with my mum because she is a female and it is your mum. I just don't get embarrassed talking to my dad because he has done this and been my age once.

**Researcher:** What topics are embarrassing to talk about (e.g. relationships)?

**Son:** With my mum it is about girls and relationships, and private things.

**Researcher:** Why do you get embarrassed talking about these topics?

**Son:** Because she is your mum.

**Researcher:** After discussions, what aspects of SRE did you still want to know more about?

**Son:** We had a talk about not doing stuff and things like that but, I didn't know about the diseases and that's what I felt I needed to know more about, but then the roadshow taught me that which was good.

**Researcher:** Who would you like to teach you about sexual matters?

**Son:** I think I would prefer a bit off my mum, my dad and then I have picked the other facts up from the roadshow.

**Researcher:** Why, what is the reason for this?

**Son:** Just because each one has different information to give, but together I think I know quite a bit from all of them.

**Researcher:** Do you think that your pick things up from other peoples conversations regarding SRE?

**Son:** Not really, because I don't think they talk about diseases and I think that is a big thing and the things that can happen to you.

**Researcher:** What sorts of sexual matters do you discuss with friends?

**Son:** Only with my best friends and they ask if I have had sex yet? And you feel you can tell your best friends things like that because they are not going to go and say things to other people, so then you don't get embarrassed and you can trust them.

**Researcher:** Are these friends of the same or opposite sex?

**Son:** My best friends are lads, but I do have friends who are girls as well, but I don't tell them what I tell my best friends.

**Researcher:** What makes you want to talk to your friends about sexual matters?

**Son:** It is because they are your best friends and you can trust them. They wouldn't talk to other people about what I say, and I wouldn't talk to others about what they say.

**Researcher:** What aspects of SRE do you learn more about when talking to friends?

**Son:** I don't think I learn anything. It is just talking about what we all already know and the things we are experiencing.

**Researcher:** Are there things that you would discuss with your friends that you would not discuss with your parents?

**Son:** If my parents asked me I would tell them what I tell my friends, then I but if they don't ask I don't tell them because I don't think they need to know.

**Researcher:** If yes, why and what sexual matters would these be?

**Son:** Just about sex and whether I have had it.

**Researcher:** Do you think that your friends know more about SRE matters than you do?

**Son:** No, I wouldn't say that.

**Researcher:** Which parent do you mainly talk to about sexual matters?

**Son:** My dad and sometimes my mum.

**Researcher:** Why is it this parent (i.e. factors)?

**Son:** Talk to dad mainly because he knows what I am going through with being a male.

**Researcher:** Why do you think the dad teaches the most about SRE, rather than your mother?

**Son:** Maybe because he has been young himself and does not want me to do the same things that he though was a mistake. I think he just wants to look out for me.

**Researcher:** Why do you prefer to talk to this parent about sexual matters (Is it possible due to being the same sex)?

**Son:** It is a lad thing.

**Researcher:** Would you prefer to discuss sexual matters with your other parent instead or as well?

**Son:** I do sometimes. We are quite open about sex, but I think my dad just tells me more about what it is like for a male.

**Researcher:** Who initiates the conversations regarding sexual matters?

**Son:** I think it is me and them.

**Researcher:** What SRE topics have your parents discussed with you, and at what age did these conversations occur?

**Son:** I think when I was 13 the conversations really started and it was mainly about like, don't be stupid and have a baby when you are 14 because you want to do that sort of thing when you have got a good job and a house to look after the baby. It was to do with thinking about what I want from life and not feel rushed into make decisions, just things like that really.

**Researcher:** When and what circumstances are these conversations likely to occur?

**Son:** I can talk to my dad anytime, but it is normally when we are in the car going to the match or when we play football together on a Wednesday night.

**Researcher:** What topics do your parents NOT discuss with you concerning SRE?

**Son:** I don't know really. Even though I live with my mum, I think I would tell my dad more, but I can't say I wouldn't discuss things with him because we have talked quite a lot about things anyway.

**Researcher:** Where do you think you will learn about the sexual matters if your parent's don't teach you?

**Son:** The clinic, because if you wanted to know something they would tell you the right information. Teachers wouldn't, but I think my friends would tell me things if my parents didn't.

**Researcher:** Do you think your parent's have the most up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach you about sexual matters?

**Son:** Well, I think my mum and dad do know about a lot of things, but the roadshow taught me the most about diseases because the people there were professionals. Mum and dad might not know the facts like they did because it is not their job, but they would know about sexual relationships.

**Researcher:** Are there any restrictions on not discussing sexual matters within the family amongst yourselves?

**Son:** No.

**Researcher:** Do you feel that your family talk openly about sexual matters within the family?

**Son:** Yes, I would have the conversations with them like I am having now with you. I think we do talk openly about things, even though I think I talk about more sexual things with my dad than my mum.

**Researcher:** How do you think other families communicate SRE, compared to yours?

**Son:** I don't think my mates are as open as I am. They wouldn't talk to their mum and dad about stuff like this. I think I have a good relationship with my mum and dad compared to my friends.

**Researcher:** Do you think in general more sex education is given to female children rather than male children?

**Son:** Not education, but I think more advice is given to girls because they can get pregnant and they have periods.

**Researcher:** Some young males sometimes feel that fewer SRE matters are discussed with young females, but do you agree?

**Son:** I think we are given the same sex education, but more sex education is aimed at girls than boys because they are most at risk of getting pregnant and having to make decisions on what is best if she falls pregnant.

**Researcher:** At what age do you think your parents want you to know about sexual matters?

**Son:** I think they think I am intelligent and they trust me not to be stupid, so I think they are happy for me to know it all now, but I think they were wanting me to start thinking about risky behaviours when I was about 12 or 13 as I was getting older.

**Researcher:** Do the school involve your parents in the SRE you receive?

**Son:** No.

**Researcher:** Do you want your parents to have more involvement in the SRE you receive in school?

**Son:** I think that my parents know enough and wouldn't need the schools help, so I don't think my mum and dad would want to get involved with the things that the school are doing, because they have told me as much as the teachers did. It was only the roadshow where I think it all came together because I learnt a lot from it.

**Researcher:** Would you prefer for sexual matters to be discussed more openly within the family?

**Son:** I think the family already talks openly about sexual matters.

**Researcher:** Would you have been as open answering these questions if your parents had been present?

**Son:** I do have a good relationship with them, but I would have answered some the same, but some differently. It is a bit of a balance really, I don't know if I could say I would have told you as much if they had been here.

**Researcher:** What main forms of the media (computers, magazines etc) do you use to learn about issues regarding SRE?

**Son:** Probably only the television.

**Researcher:** What sorts of things do you learn from these sources that you do not get taught about elsewhere?

**Son:** Well, there was the pregnancy thing in Coronation Street with Sarah who had the baby and her mum looks after it, but it isn't always going to be that way. One day she will have to look after it is herself, but television isn't real, it's only acts.

**Researcher:** Do you prefer to use these sources to learn about SRE?

**Son:** No, I prefer to ask my mum and dad because if you needed to know something they would give you the answer straight away, but soaps don't, it is just acting.

**Researcher:** What impact do you think the media (computers, magazines, etc) has regarding the SRE that you learn?

**Son:** It teaches you about pregnancy and the morning after pill and things like that, but it just shows you what you don't want for yourself, so I think it does have an impact if you are like that, but I am not. It just shows you about what you don't want from life. I think people can learn from television, but I think they will learn more by asking their parents.

**Researcher:** Do you think the media act as a deterrent when showing the consequences and negativity associated with some sexual behaviours/issues?

**Son:** Yes.

**Researcher:** When reading magazines, watching TV, videos and other media types do you feel that you can relate to what you are reading about or watching?

**Son:** No, because it is not real. When people talk about programmes, they just need to get a grip and calm down because it is not real.

**Researcher:** When using the media to learn about SRE do you feel you learn more about the opposite sex?

**Son:** Yes.

**Researcher:** Do you feel more confident with the knowledge you have learnt when using the different media types?

**Son:** No.

**Researcher:** Do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing?

**Son:** Well, it can be a good thing in that you find out some information, but it is a bad thing with some of the messages it passes out, like in Coronation Street. They are more or less saying that if you have a baby at thirteen, your mum or other people will look after it and that's not right, and it's not true because you have to look after that baby yourself.

**Researcher:** Do you think the religious beliefs you have been brought up with influences the SRE you receive?

**Son:** No.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Son:** Yes, it looked interesting in that it covered a lot of topics.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Son:** The fly.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Son:** None, I thought it was good with what I have seen.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Son:** 13-15 or 16.

**Researcher:** Was there any aspect of the CD that you would feel uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Son:** I don't know really.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Son:** Not really. I wouldn't discuss some things on the CD with my mum, but I would probably talk to my dad, or friends.

**Researcher:** Would you prefer to talk to your parents rather than find out about SRE aspects by using the CD?

**Son:** I think the CD would be good in giving information, but you can get answers straight away from your mum and dad.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Son:** Yes, in some families it would because it would give people an idea of the topics that need to be covered and what they need to know more about.

**Researcher:** After you have watched the CD do you feel you would be able to talk more openly with your parents about all aspects raised within the CD?

**Son:** No, because we are open anyway.

The son was thanked for his time and asked to complete the post sexual knowledge questionnaire. The female parent was then interviewed and the following questions were asked.

### **Interview with Parent**

**Researcher:** What sex and relationship education (SRE) was taught to you as parents when you were younger?

**Mother:** In junior school we didn't get any, but in secondary school I remember all the boys and girls had to go in to the theatre and on the screen we got this video shown and they went through the male and females body changes and then showed you how to put a condom on the penis before these stick men type people had sex. Girls also got given a little case with tampons in for their periods. They video also showed STIs, in particular syphilis and then we walked out and for the next week everything we had seen including green stuff coming out of the end of the penis just became a great big laugh. That's all I can remember.

**Researcher:** Which of your parents taught you about sexual matters, and why do you think it was this parent?

**Mother:** Neither did.

**Researcher:** Did your own parents ever comment on the sex education that they received when they were younger?

**Mother:** They never mentioned any, but you just knew they had had no sex education just by the way they talked. I think because they didn't have the education they did not know how to talk to us (four children) about it.

**Researcher:** With hindsight, do you think your parents had sufficient knowledge to teach you about sexual matters?

**Mother:** No, they wouldn't know where to start.

**Researcher:** Do you feel your family talked openly about sexual matters when you were younger?

**Mother:** No, never.

**Researcher:** If no, why do you think sexual matters were not discussed more openly within your family when you were younger?

**Mother:** Me and my sisters used to talk about periods, sex and boys, but I shared a room with one of my sisters who fell pregnant at the age of 15. I was there throughout her whole pregnancy so I think that taught me a thing or two. But it just wasn't the done thing. You just didn't do it and especially not before marriage, so it never got discussed. I am sure my parents discussed things with my sister when she was pregnant, but it was a bit too late in the day to be talking about it then.

**Researcher:** Who taught you the most about SRE matters (i.e. mother, father, school, etc)?

**Mother:** My two older sisters and friends.

**Researcher:** At what age was SRE taught and what topics were discussed?

**Mother:** About 12 years.

**Researcher:** How and in what context was SRE taught?

**Mother:** Well, I suppose with my sister she would tell me about her boyfriends and then you know when you start fancying the opposite sex that you start to ask your friends questions and learn from them and their experiences.

**Researcher:** Were there any aspects of SRE that you still wanted to know more about?

**Mother:** No, I don't think so. I just took what was told to me and pieced it together from there.

**Researcher:** With hindsight, do you think the topics associated with the SRE you were given were younger was accurate and correct?

**Mother:** Yes, I think so, but I think that was only because my sisters were older than me and had found out the right information for themselves and then passed that knowledge onto me.

**Researcher:** How did you find out SRE for yourself?

**Mother:** I didn't. I just learnt from my sisters and friends.

**Researcher:** If through friends, do you think they knew much more than you?

**Mother:** No, probably not. They probably got their information from their sisters, so I think it was the fact of just pooling the knowledge and trying to make sense of it together.

**Researcher:** Did you learn any SRE from listening to other people conversations?

**Mother:** Yes, definitely.

**Researcher:** What age do you think you were when you felt you had adequate knowledge of SRE topics?

**Mother:** I think when I had seen my sister have her baby and asked her questions about how she felt, I think I knew pretty much everything to do with sex and sexual relationships by about the age of 16, but I still don't know all there is to know about STIs because nobody has ever really told me about them.

**Researcher:** With hindsight, do you think you knew enough sex education at your different developmental stages to prepare you for adult life?

**Mother:** No, the sex education could have been far better. People were not encouraged to talk about sex openly. It wasn't like you could ask any questions if you were unsure of something.

**Researcher:** If you look back to the SRE that was taught when you were younger, how do you think it could have been improved to provide you with the information you wanted or needed at the time?

**Mother:** Looking back it could have definitely been improved. It would have been better if a person had explained a bit more of what we had seen on the video, but I don't think I

would have done anything different. It is just there seemed to be a stigma attached to talking about sex and nobody really took any notice of the video because the information was not reiterated in a way that we could understand the full aspects of sex and what was involved with sexual relationships.

**Researcher:** Would you have preferred for SRE matters to have been discussed more openly within the family when you were younger?

**Mother:** I would have if I didn't have my sisters. I felt okay because I had them teaching me more, but I think the school could have been more open.

**Researcher:** Do you think that if the SRE taught to you had been discussed more openly you would feel more comfortable talking to your children about sexual matters?

**Mother:** No, I am open with my sons. I have definitely done things differently through the way I was taught. I think my eldest son has a better relationship with his dad when talking about sex because he sees it as a man thing. Even though I encourage him and say he can talk to me, I suppose I am lucky that me and his dad get on and we are good friends, so I think that helps the kids in the fact that they know they can come to us both. I mean I do say to him and his mates when they go out ... *'Have you got your condoms, don't forget if you are going to do it, practice it safely'* and they go *'yes, we will'*.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the SRE that was taught, compared with today's teaching?

**Mother:** I don't know because I don't know what it taught today. I know that sounds awful as a parent, but I haven't asked and they haven't told me.

**Researcher:** How was sex discussed when you were younger and why do you think it was discussed in this way (i.e. embarrassment)?

**Mother:** I think it was just people didn't feel comfortable talking about it because that was the way they were brought up. Maybe some embarrassment was there, but I think it is more down to how society was then.

**Researcher:** Do you as a parent feel you have the up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach your child about sexual matters?

**Mother:** No, I haven't.

**Researcher:** What sex and relationship education (SRE) has been taught to your children?

**Mother:** I am not aware of what has been taught. I think my eldest must have come home sometime and said that he had had sex education, but I didn't ask any questions. I mean I know that sounds bad that I didn't encourage him to talk to me, but I think he prefers to talk to his dad. Even though his dad doesn't live here they are together two nights of the week and I know they talk about sexual things, so I suppose that is why I don't really push him into talking to me.

**Researcher:** What size of group was SRE taught in and was it mixed or single-sex group?

**Mother:** Don't know.

**Researcher:** Do you know if signposting was given to say where they could get further information or advice?

**Mother:** Don't know.

**Researcher:** Who has taught SRE to your children (i.e. mother, father, school, etc)?

**Mother:** I would say his dad.



**Researcher:** Why do you think they prefer to learn about sexual matters from this person (Is it possible due to being the same sex?)?

**Mother:** Just because it is a male thing, really. Plus they are really close and they have a special bond.

**Researcher:** At what age was SRE taught to your children and what topics were discussed?

**Mother:** I would say over the last 18 months they have had the man to man talks. His dad is very open, he is just like one of the lads and I think him and his dads are more like mates.

**Researcher:** Who initiated the discussion of SRE?

**Mother:** I think his dad. I mean he will say to our son: *'by there is some nice totty over there isn't there son?'* And I will say: *'Do you have to talk to him like that?'* but I guess that is his way of opening up the conversation and then they will talk more about different things from there. But, I think the flood-gates have always been open with his dad so he feels more comfortable talking to him about it because that is what they have always done. Even if it starts off as a joke, his dad will turn it around as though it is more of a time for offering advice and I think he learns a lot from that.

**Researcher:** Was it embarrassing for you as a parent to discuss sexual matters with your child?

**Mother:** No, not at all.

**Researcher:** After discussions, what aspects of SRE do you think your children still want to know more about?

**Mother:** I don't think there is, or he would ask.

**Researcher:** Who would you like to teach your children about sexual matters?

**Mother:** I think it needs to come from an authoritarian person within the school, but this person will need to be on their wave-length. I mean my son will get information from me and his dad, but I think he needs the formal education where he gets told things that we possibly don't know all there is to know.

**Researcher:** Why, and what is the reason for this?

**Mother:** Just so he gets the correct information in a serious way and then me and his dad can add to that.

**Researcher:** What sorts of sexual matters do you think your children discuss with their friends?

**Mother:** Sex, when did they have it? Who do they fancy? What have they tried and things like that.

**Researcher:** Are these friends of the same or opposite sex?

**Mother:** Oh, no. He has lots of friends who are both boys and girls.

**Researcher:** Why do you think your children want to talk to their friends about sexual matters?

**Mother:** Just because that's what kids do. They do talk to try and find out what is the right way and wrong way to behave.

**Researcher:** What aspects of SRE do you think they learn more about when talking to their friends?

**Mother:** I don't think they will learn a lot more, or the importance, but I think they just talk and gossip about what is going on at the time with their other friends.

**Researcher:** Do you think your child will discuss some sexual matters with his friends that they would not talk to you about?

**Mother:** I think he would talk to his friends first, then his dad and then me, but I am not sure whether he talks to his dad about what he talks to his friends about. I know he doesn't tell me though, but I do overhear some conversations they have and they are definitely not educational.

**Researcher:** If yes, why and what sorts of things do you think they discuss?

**Mother:** I don't know why he prefers to talk to his friends. I can only guess that it is because they understand what each are going through in this day and age.

**Researcher:** Which parent mainly talks to their children about sexual matters?

**Mother:** His father.

**Researcher:** Why is it this parent (i.e. factors)?

**Mother:** Just because they are the same sex I think and there is the father-son bond.

**Researcher:** If Father – why do you think the dad teaches the most about SRE, rather than your mother?

**Mother:** I think he can relate to his father a lot more and his father talks more openly about sex than maybe I do, even if it is in a joking manner.

**Researcher:** Who initiates the conversations regarding sexual matters?

**Mother:** I think his father will mainly, but then our son will add things on and ask more.

**Researcher:** What topics do parents discuss with their children, and at what age (Is it different for sons and daughters)?

**Mother:** I wouldn't say I have sat him down and discussed things with him, but we have talked just in general. Like I say he does talk to his dad more than me.

**Researcher:** When and what circumstances are these conversations likely to occur?

**Mother:** I think he will talk with his father on a Wednesday and a Friday when he visits and then also when they go to football matches together. I am sure they will have a male banter then.

**Researcher:** What topics do parents NOT discuss with their children?

**Mother:** Well, I don't know exactly what him and his father do not talk about, but I wouldn't discuss fantasies and things like that because I think that is rather personal, but if he wanted to talk to me about things I would discuss things with him, but he doesn't.

**Researcher:** Why do parents omit these topics regarding sexual matters? (i.e. embarrassment?)

**Mother:** I think it might be an invasion of his privacy and if he wants to tell me things then he will. I think he gets embarrassed talking to me about things. Like the other month he told me his testicles were hurting all the time. We talked about that and the reasons why it could be happening. The only thing he didn't do was show me them, but he said that was going to show his dad and he would let me know if they continued to hurt. He hasn't mentioned anything, but he did show his dad. We had a laugh about it actually when he brought him back home. His dad was saying how he couldn't believe he just dropped them and showed him, but then he had a look and they discussed how you check for cancer and things like that. I don't know if they showed each others, but apparently they had a long chat about it, so that's what I meant before in that even if he doesn't show or tell me everything, I know he will go to his dad, and his dad will have probably ask about how things were feeling the next time he saw our son, but that is just the way he is.

**Researcher:** Where do you think your child will learn about the sexual matters if you don't teach them?

**Mother:** Probably friends.

**Researcher:** Are there any restrictions on not discussing sexual matters within the family amongst yourselves?

**Mother:** No, I wouldn't say so.

**Researcher:** Do you feel that your family talk openly about sexual matters within the family?

**Mother:** I think we do. I know I don't push the conversation, but I think he would come to me if he wanted to know something or was worried about something. With his dad though; his dad will ask if he has seen his girlfriend and then he will lead on from there and say things like *'I hope you have been behaving yourself, I don't want to be a grandfather yet'* and thinks like that, but he is just so open about it and I think that might also lead our son to talk to him more because he asks more and he is dead open with his answers or the conversations they have.

**Researcher:** How do you think other families communicate SRE, compared to yours?

**Mother:** I think pretty much the same, I would have thought.

**Researcher:** Do you think in general more sex education is given to female children rather than male children?

**Mother:** No, I wouldn't have thought so, but I think it is more aimed at girls because they can get pregnant and the boy can walk away.

**Researcher:** At what age do you want your children to know about sexual matters?

**Mother:** When he starts experiencing things.

**Researcher:** Do the school involve parents in the educating of the children?

**Mother:** No, they never have.

**Researcher:** If no, how do you think the school could improve their approach to involving parents more?

**Mother:** I do think that at parents evening they could be telling us what is being taught and I think at the beginning of the term they should send letters to the parents to tell us what they are teaching our children.

**Researcher:** So do you think that as a parent if you knew more about what was being taught and when it is taught that this would strengthen the relationship with you child/ren when discussing sexual matters within the home environment?

**Mother:** I don't know really, but I would ask if I knew when he was having it and that might allow me and him to talk more together, as well as him talking to his dad.

**Researcher:** What main forms of the media (computers, magazines etc) do your children use to learn about issues regarding SRE?

**Mother:** Television, films, mainly the TV.

**Researcher:** What sorts of things do you think they learn from these sources that they do not get taught about elsewhere?

**Mother:** I think the television has got better in that now they may learn more about relationships, but I don't think he will learn anything he doesn't already know, but it will just reinforce messages he has already taken on board.

**Researcher:** Do you think he prefers to use these sources to learn about SRE?

**Mother:** No, I think he would prefer to ask his friends, his dad or possibly me.

**Researcher:** If so, why? N/A.

**Researcher:** What impact do you think the media (computers, magazines, etc) have on adolescents regarding the SRE that they learn?

**Mother:** I don't really know because my sons might watch television, but they will be doing something else at the same time, so I am not quite sure if it would have the same impact as if they were to sit down and watch a soap opera on a regular basis like some young people might. With them being lads they are normally reading football magazines or on MSN with their friends.

**Researcher:** Do you think the media act as a deterrent when showing the consequences and negativity associated with some sexual behaviours/issues?

**Mother:** I think it can, but I think it would be useful at the end of programmes just to have a few sentences to stress the importance of things.

**Researcher:** When your children use the media to learn about sexual matters do you feel they use these because they can relate to what they are being told about?

**Mother:** Yes, definitely.

**Researcher:** When your children use the media, do you think they learn more about the opposite sex?

**Mother:** Yes.

**Researcher:** Do you think your children feel more confident with the knowledge they have learnt from the different media types they view and read?

**Mother:** No, I don't think it makes him more confident.

**Researcher:** Do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing?

**Mother:** A bit of both. I think it can be good in that it does open up conversations for kids who don't have anyone to talk to, but the media can be quite powerful in the messages they send out and I think sometimes the message are ambiguous and confuse young people about what is right and wrong.

**Researcher:** Do you think the parent's religion impacts on the SRE they give to their children?

**Mother:** Definitely, but I don't know really what sex education they get taught in value schools either, but I just know of some Catholic parents who will not tell their children things because of their faith.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Mother:** It seemed good in that it was modern and colourful and loud.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Mother:** It had lots of variety in the different sections.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Mother:** I thought the continuous noise was annoying. I couldn't hear myself think and I found it distracting.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Mother:** About 13 or 14 maybe.

**Researcher:** Was there any aspects of the CD that you would feel uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Mother:** Probably the sexual fantasises. I think he would get embarrassed if we watched that together.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Mother:** From the bit I saw I don't think we have discussed STIs in great detail, but we have touched on it, but I will need to see more to answer that question more fully.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Mother:** Yes, definitely.

**Researcher:** As a parent do you feel you could talk openly with your child about all aspects raised within the CD or is there things on the CD you were not aware of as a parent?

**Mother:** I think I could give him the basics, but I don't know everything there is to know about sex, especially not STIs.

The mother was asked to complete the post sexual knowledge questionnaire and the researcher went BACK ONE WEEK LATER and ask questions to gain clarity as to how the CD has broken down any barriers when discussing SRE within the family.

### **Interview with son**

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Son:** I thought it was quite good in that it let you look at the things that you wanted to know more about, such as the virtual clinic.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Son:** I liked the virtual clinic because it taught me the most.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Son:** None.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Son:** Around my age. I know I said about 16 before, but it may not be that good then because people will have needed to know a lot of the information before they have relationships, so I think from about 13-15 would be good, for me to use the CD.

**Researcher:** Was there any aspect of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Son:** Well, I wouldn't feel comfortable talking about ejaculating quickly. I think that would be embarrassing with my mum there, even though she will know about it.

**Researcher:** So, would you get embarrassed talking about masturbation and ejaculating quickly with you dad?

**Son:** I don't know really. We have talked about that, but it has been more in a joking way and not aimed at me.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Son:** I wouldn't discuss oral sex with my parents, because those things are between the two people and it isn't right to talk about that with other people, not even friends or your mum or dad.

**Researcher:** Would you prefer to talk to your parents rather than find out about SRE aspects by using the CD?

**Son:** I think the CD is good in giving information on more about the facts of diseases and things like that, but I think my parents know a lot of what is on there, so I would probably talk to them both.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Son:** Yes, because you could learn about something from the CD and then parents can tell you more about what the CD doesn't say. I also think the CD would be more useful in

schools because then people could look for the information they need that the teachers don't tell you about.

**Researcher:** After you have watched the CD do you feel you would be able to talk more openly with your parents about all aspects raised within the CD?

**Son:** No.

**Researcher:** After you have watched the CD do you feel you would be able to talk more openly with your parents about all aspects raised within the CD?

**Son:** No, I think it will just be the same as before today.

The son was asked to complete the follow-up sexual knowledge questionnaire, given a de-brief of the study and thanked for his time. The following questions were then asked to the mother.

### **Interview with parent**

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Mother:** I thought it was aimed at young people and what appeals to them. I think a lot would find it really interesting.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Mother:** I liked the graphics and the fly on the wall because he summarised the important facts.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Mother:** Apart from the noise, I found it difficult to navigate, especially with the puberty section where you had to click onto the crosses, but I am not the most computer literate person in the world, so it is probably me and nothing to do with the CD.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Mother:** I think it was a bit too complex for children below the age of 13, but too late for say 16 year olds. I think they would switch off because they would know it all by then.

**Researcher:** Was there any aspects of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Mother:** Some, yes. Mainly the sexual fantasies I think.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Mother:** Yes, sexual fantasises and masturbation. I don't know if he has talked to his dad about it though.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Mother:** Yes, especially in families that are not very open.

**Researcher:** As a parent do you feel you could talk openly with your child about all aspects raised within the CD or is there things on the CD you were not aware of as a parent?

**Mother:** I have learnt things from it that I didn't know before, but I am not sure he would feel comfortable talking to me about things on the CD, but I am sure he will talk to his dad about it.

The mother was asked to complete the follow-up sexual knowledge questionnaire, given a de-brief of the study and thanked for her time.

**End of Interview.**

## 18<sup>th</sup> Family Interview - Stage II

**Participants:** Divorce female parent (35 years) and son (15 years). No father present.

**Consent form signed and retained by the family and researcher.**

**Researcher:** Thank you. I would also like to ask if it is possible for either one of you to leave the room so I could do the first interview. Mother and son decided that the mother should be interviewed first. The son was then asked to take the demographics form and the sexual knowledge questionnaire to be completed. The researcher asked the mother to complete the demographics form and the sexual knowledge questionnaire and then the interview started by asking the mother the following questions.

### Interview with Mother

**Researcher:** What sex and relationship education (SRE) was taught to you as a parent when you were younger?

**Mother:** Very little really. We briefly got told about things to do with puberty and sex in biology, but it was the basic facts and nothing more. It was basically about the facts to do with reproduction.

**Researcher:** Which of your parents taught you about sexual matters, and why do you think it was this parent?

**Mother:** Neither of them, but I think that was to do with them being of the old school and sex not being talked about in those days. Even now we wouldn't be able to talk about sex openly because my mother was brought up as a strict Catholic and that is just the way it is.

**Researcher:** Did your own parents ever comment on the sex education that they received when they were younger?

**Mother:** I don't think, in fact I know my nana would never have talked about it with my mum and my dad's mum would not have talked about it either so I think that is why they never talked openly about it when I was growing up. They have never talked about the sex education they got from school, but I can imagine with the strict Catholic upbringing they would not have been told anything.

**Researcher:** With hindsight, do you think your parents had sufficient knowledge to teach you about sexual matters?

**Mother:** I don't know. I just think with the way things were then it was almost like they would be ashamed to talk about sex. Things were very much frowned upon in those days, such as teenage pregnancy. I remember one of my mum's friends getting pregnant and she was sent away to have the baby and then came back as though nothing had happened. I think that is the way it was dealt with by almost brushing it under the carpet as though nothing had happened.

**Researcher:** Do you feel your family talked openly about sexual matters when you were younger?

**Mother:** No definitely not. It was never discussed with me or my sister. They don't even talk about it openly now even though we have kids. It is and has just never been discussed.

**Researcher:** If no, why do you think sexual matters were not discussed more openly within your family when you were younger?

**Mother:** I think because my mother was taught by nuns it was just completely frowned upon that young girls should not have sex until they are married and because of the way she was brought up she has just continued to follow those beliefs. It was more to do with the religion I think, which prevented our family from ever discussing sexual matters.

**Researcher:** Who taught you the most about SRE matters (i.e. mother, father, school, etc)?

**Mother:** Friends.

**Researcher:** At what age was SRE taught and what topics were discussed?

**Mother:** I think me and my friends would have started talking about sex when I was about 14 or 15 when we started to get interested in boys. We would look at magazines as well, but we were quite naïve compared to how young people are today, but I think we would have got the biology about that time and the conversations started from there really.

**Researcher:** How and in what context was SRE taught?

**Mother:** In biology class, which was mixed and we all learnt about it together.

**Researcher:** Were there any aspects of SRE that you still wanted to know more about?

**Mother:** Yes.

**Researcher:** What aspects of SRE do you remember still wanting to know more about?

**Mother:** I can't remember anything specific, but I think I just picked things up from friends and magazines and then just continued to process information as I went along really.

**Researcher:** With hindsight, do you think the topics associated with the SRE when you were given were younger was accurate and correct?

**Mother:** No, looking back there was a lot of it that was not true, but you didn't know that at the time.

**Researcher:** How did you find out SRE for yourself?

**Mother:** Friends and magazines, really.

**Researcher:** If through friends, do you think they knew much more than you?

**Mother:** Yes, I remember some of my friends used to be able to talk to their parents about sex, but I never could so I don't think I got told as much and because of that and therefore I didn't know as much as many of my friends

**Researcher:** Did you learn any SRE from listening to other people conversations?

**Mother:** Yes, I think you do even though you are not aware of it at the time.

**Researcher:** What age do you think you were when you felt you had adequate knowledge of SRE topics?

**Mother:** Probably 15 or 16 when I left school, really. I think it was at this time I was starting to learn by experience, but we never got told the information, you just had to find it out for yourself.

**Researcher:** With hindsight, do you think you knew enough sex education at your different developmental stages to prepare you for adult life?

**Mother:** No, I wouldn't say so, but I think that is when I would learn from magazines as I was growing up because they gave a lot of information that nobody wanted to talk about.

**Researcher:** If you look back to the SRE that was taught when you were younger, how do you think it could have been improved to provide you with the information you wanted or needed at the time?



**Mother:** Probably more from my parents. I think that would have helped if my parents discussed it with me, but because they didn't talk about it, you couldn't go to them and talk about it. There was why sex was never discussed openly. I mean they were the parents and you were the child and I think they set the boundaries for what was to be discussed and because they never talked about it with me or my sister, it was almost like we were not allowed to mention it to them.

**Researcher:** Would you have preferred for SRE matters to have been discussed more openly within the family when you were younger?

**Mother:** Yes, definitely.

**Researcher:** Do you think that if the SRE taught to you had been discussed more openly you would feel more comfortable talking to your children about sexual matters?

**Mother:** No, not really because I know the information to be able to tell him about things.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the SRE that was taught, compared with today's teaching?

**Mother:** It is a lot better today and there are a lot of places to find out the information, such as the Internet. Whether the information is always correct I think can be debatable, but I think a lot more information needs to focus on relationships and feelings, rather than just giving information and the facts.

**Researcher:** How was sex discussed when you were younger and why do you think it was discussed in this way (i.e. embarrassment?)?

**Mother:** It wasn't and with the bit we got at school was just facts and it wasn't discussed like we are sat talking now.

**Researcher:** Do you as a parent feel you have the up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach your child about sexual matters?

**Mother:** Yes I think so, but my doctors surgery is brilliant and there is all the information there if I wasn't sure about something, so I would know where to find things if I didn't know or wasn't sure about something.

**Researcher:** Can I ask what school your children go to?

**Mother:** A Catholic school.

**Researcher:** So may I ask why you have chose to send your children to a Catholic school knowing that they would give sex education similar to what you had?

**Mother:** Because I think it is better based on the curriculum standards. I think they also get taught more about morals and how to have respect. I think kids these days do not show the respect that they should and I wanted my kids to not be like that.

**Researcher:** Okay, thank you. May I ask what SRE has been taught to your children?

**Mother:** I don't know what they have taught him, but we know that he has had sex education because he has raised things as he has been growing up.

**Researcher:** What size of group was SRE taught in and was is it mixed or single-sex group?

**Mother:** No idea, but I think mixed.

**Researcher:** Do you know if signposting was given to say where they could get further information or advice?

**Mother:** No I don't know, but we have talked to him about it and I have also bought condoms and put them in his bedroom draw so if he is thinking about having sex then they are there to keep himself safe.

**Researcher:** Who has taught SRE to your children (i.e. mother, father, school, etc)?

**Mother:** I know I have mentioned things, but I think he gets embarrassed talking to me, but that is when his step-dad will go and talk to him. I think he also learns a lot from his friends and whatever the school have taught him. I just know they have never told us when they teach things or what is being taught.

**Researcher:** Why do you think he prefers to learn about sexual matters from this person (Is it possible due to being the same sex)?

**Mother:** I think he might prefer to talk to his dad and his friends because of all being male, but I think he also talks to his friends who are girls.

**Researcher:** At what age was SRE taught to your children and what topics were discussed?

**Mother:** I think the conversations started at about the age of 12 or 13 when he started having girlfriends, but I think we tend to make a joke of it so we don't embarrass him, rather than sitting down and talking about it in a serious manner.

**Researcher:** Who initiated the discussion of SRE?

**Mother:** Me, or his step-dad goes and talk to him. He has asked things, but I think we mainly do the questions and then he opens up from there.

**Researcher:** Was it embarrassing for you as a parent to discuss sexual matters with your child?

**Mother:** No.

**Researcher:** After discussions, what aspects of SRE do you think your children still wanted to know more about?

**Mother:** Possibly, yes. I am not sure what sorts of things though, but it is probably him having to think and put the information in context, but I think if he wanted to know more from us he would ask one of us, if not both of us.

**Researcher:** Who would you like to teach your children about sexual matters?

**Mother:** I think it should mainly come from the school, but then also parents need to be responsible and also talk to their children. If the school inform parents I also think that prompts parents and helps them talk to their children.

**Researcher:** Why, and what is the reason for this?

**Mother:** Because he would get the facts, but then also other explanations from us that are more personal to him.

**Researcher:** What sorts of sexual matters do you think your children discuss with their friends?

**Mother:** No idea, but at a guess it is probably bragging about things, even if they haven't done anything.

**Researcher:** Are these friends of the same or opposite sex?

**Mother:** Both.

**Researcher:** Why do you think your children want to talk to their friends about sexual matters?

**Mother:** I think they all want to look clever and grown-up so they will talk about things mainly to learn but also look clever and macho.

**Researcher:** What aspects of SRE do you think they learn more about when talking to their friends?

**Mother:** What each of them have done, or not done and what they experienced.

**Researcher:** Do you think your child will discuss some sexual matters with his friends that they would not talk to you about?

**Mother:** Yes, definitely.

**Researcher:** If yes, why and what sorts of things do you think they discuss?

**Mother:** Boy things and things about girls. Girls often seem to be a top subject at the moment.

**Researcher:** Which parent mainly talks to their children about sexual matters?

**Mother:** Equal I think.

**Researcher:** Why is it this parent (i.e. factors)?

**Mother:** Because we seem to gang up together to get messages across from both perspectives.

**Researcher:** If Mother – why do you think the mum teaches the most about SRE, rather than your father? If Father – why do you think the dad teaches the most about SRE, rather than your mother?

**Mother:** I think because we know what it was like for each of us and I want them to be able to come to us about anything and be open about anything, including sex. Even if he doesn't come to us, he knows he can if he wants to.

**Researcher:** Why do you think they prefer to talk to this parent about sexual matters (Is it possible due to being the same sex)?

**Mother:** I don't think he sometimes prefers to, but we see how he is changing and know the things we need to reinforce.

**Researcher:** Who initiates the conversations regarding sexual matters?

**Mother:** Mainly us (the parents).

**Researcher:** What topics do parents discuss with their children, and at what age and is it different for sons and daughters?

**Mother:** I know we have talked to him about puberty aspects, girls, relationships, respect and sex and I know him and his step-dad have talked about things that happen to males.

**Researcher:** When and what circumstances are these conversations likely to occur?

**Mother:** Mainly when new girlfriend come on the scene. We have the talks again.

**Researcher:** What topics do parents NOT discuss with their children?

**Mother:** No, I don't think so.

**Researcher:** Where do you think your child will learn about the sexual matters if you don't teach them?

**Mother:** School probably.

**Researcher:** Are there any restrictions on not discussing sexual matters within the family amongst yourselves?

**Mother:** No.

**Researcher:** Do you feel that your family talk openly about sexual matters within the family?

**Mother:** Yes, I mean it tends to be more in a joking way, but we seem to talk about the serious points.

**Researcher:** How do you think other families communicate SRE, compared to yours?

**Mother:** Everybody's different. I think some families are quite open, but other families reserved. I think we are totally opposite to the way I was taught about sexual matters within the family.

**Researcher:** Do you think in general more sex education is given to female children rather than male children?

**Mother:** Yes. I think there are a lot more emphasis is put on protection and pregnancy for girls because they can get pregnant, but also they have periods and boys don't.

**Researcher:** At what age do you want your children to know about sexual matters?

**Mother:** I think it depends on the child. I think some children are naïve longer than others, but our son wasn't naïve and when he was 12/ 13 he all of a sudden had an interest in girls so that was a big indication to start talking to him about it, but if that hadn't happened then I may have not discussed some things with him until he was older, but for him we talked about something's before he started seeing girls, but then we had to up the pace when he got to 12 just to keep himself safe and not feel he should have sex and we put a lot more emphasis on positive relationships, morals and respect as well as giving him the facts.

**Researcher:** Do the school involve parents in the educating of the children?

**Mother:** No, they never have.

**Researcher:** If no, how do you think the school could improve their approach to involving parents more?

**Mother:** Yes, because I think it would make more parents would be aware of what their children are being taught, but it also allows parents to think about ways to approach their children so they can discuss it more openly. Parents would also know what information they have to find out so they can then also talk to their children because not all parents are up-to-date with the facts.

**Researcher:** So do you think that as a parent if you knew more about what was being taught and when it is taught that this would strengthen the relationship with you children when discussing sexual matters within the home environment?

**Mother:** Maybe not strengthen it, but would leave that window open for the topic to be raised.

**Researcher:** What main forms of the media (computers, magazines etc) do your children use to learn about issues regarding SRE?

**Mother:** The Internet. I think too much is available on the Internet.

**Researcher:** What sorts of things do you think they learn from these sources that they do not get taught about elsewhere?

**Mother:** I think he probable looks at porn and things like that with his friends when we are not around but also things to do with women who are glamorised by the media.

**Researcher:** Do you think they prefer to use these sources to learn about SRE?

**Mother:** Yes.

**Researcher:** If so, why?

**Mother:** Easy access.

**Researcher:** What impact do you think the media (computers, magazines, etc) have on adolescents regarding the SRE that they learn?

**Mother:** A massive one, but I think sometimes they bombard people with so much information about sex and it is not in a nice way. Even the Google searches give some really tasteless information, but to get the factual descent information, you have to see some of the negative aspects to do with sex which sometimes makes having sex at a young age the norm and very fashionable.

**Researcher:** Do you think the media act as a deterrent when showing the consequences and negativity associated with some sexual behaviours/issues?

**Mother:** Yes and no. I think it can but it also glamorises sex and sexual behaviours.

**Researcher:** When your children use the media to learn about sexual matters do you feel they use these because they can relate to what they are being told about?

**Mother:** I think girls can more than boys, because girls get more involved in soaps and read problem pages in magazines.

**Researcher:** When your children use the media, do you think they learn more about the opposite sex?

**Mother:** Yes.

**Researcher:** Do you think your children feel more confident with the knowledge they have learnt from the different media types they view and read?

**Mother:** My son doesn't watch much TV or other media types, but I think he feels more confident when he finds things out from us and his friends.

**Researcher:** Do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing?

**Mother:** Both, but I think it needs to consider the impact it is having on very small children. I mean it is fine when they are teenagers, but if something like chlamydia comes on the radio and you have a 6/7 year old child and they ask what it means; I just think they are too young to be having that conversation. Children need to be children for longer in my opinion.

**Researcher:** Do you think the parent's religion impacts on the SRE they give to their children?

**Mother:** Yes and no. I think a lot of years ago when my parents were younger, but now I think sex is a lot more open in society in that it is always in the media, people talk more now, there is more teenage pregnancies than ever before and the STIs are a lot more common, so I think it does, but I think that has come through more to do with societal changes.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Mother:** It looks good.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Mother:** It covered puberty and body parts well, which I think all young people will be able to relate to.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Mother:** There wasn't anything really.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Mother:** I am not quite sure until I watch more, but I would think from about 9 or 10..

**Researcher:** Was there any aspect of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Mother:** Not that I saw.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Mother:** I am not sure without watching more, but at a guess no because we have discussed a lot to do with sexual matters within the family.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Mother:** It might help raise issues that my son wants to talk about.

**Researcher:** As a parent do you feel you could talk openly with your child about all aspects raised within the CD or is there things on the CD you were not aware of as a parent?

**Mother:** No, I don't think it will help us in discussing sex or sexual matters.

The mother was asked to complete the post sexual knowledge questionnaire and her son was asked the following questions.

### **Interview with Son**

**Researcher:** What sex and relationship education (SRE) has been taught to you?

**Son:** Not much really. I think it was a bit more in-depth at primary school about what was going to happen when you grew up, but at secondary school I have mainly learnt the most off my friends.

**Researcher:** What size of group is SRE taught in and is it mixed or single-sex?

**Son:** Full class of about 30, which was mixed and that was in secondary school, but in primary school we got separated and told only about what was going to happen to boys.

**Researcher:** Is this an ideal setting or would you prefer different sizes of groups and gender when being taught SRE? If different, how?

**Son:** Yes, I don't mind.

**Researcher:** Was signposting given to say where you get further information or advice?

**Son:** No, they gave us nothing.

**Researcher:** Do you know where to go for contraceptive and sexual health advice?

**Son:** Yes, but that is only because my mum, step-dad and friends have told me, not the school.

**Researcher:** Who has taught you the most about the SRE (i.e. mother, father, school, etc)?

**Son:** Family and friends.

**Researcher:** Why do you prefer to talk to this person about sex (Is it possible due to being the same sex)?

**Son:** Friends mainly because they are going through the same things as me.

**Researcher:** At what age was SRE first taught and what topics were discussed?

**Son:** I would mainly say in the last year of primary school and the first year in secondary school.

**Researcher:** Who initiated the discussion of SRE?

**Son:** I would say my mum and step-dad.

**Researcher:** If the parent, why do you think they told you about sexual matters?

**Son:** I think they have told me because they don't want me to get into trouble.

**Researcher:** Was it embarrassing to discuss sexual matters?

**Son:** No.

**Researcher:** After discussions, what aspects of SRE did you still want to know more about?

**Son:** I suppose it would have been better that when we got told about contraception that they told us where to get it from if I needed it. Not that I have but the school didn't cover this and only briefly talked about the different types of contraception.

**Researcher:** Who would you like to teach you about sexual matters?

**Son:** My parents and somebody who would come into the school that wouldn't normally teach us other things.

**Researcher:** Why, what is the reason for this?

**Son:** Simply because they would probably tell us more than the teachers.

**Researcher:** Do you think that you pick things up from other people's conversations regarding SRE?

**Son:** Yes.

**Researcher:** What sorts of sexual matters do you discuss with friends?

**Son:** I don't know really. I think you just learn about what it is like for them and what they are experiencing.

**Researcher:** Are these friends of the same or opposite sex?

**Son:** Both.

**Researcher:** What makes you want to talk to your friends about sexual matters?

**Son:** I think it is because you trust them and they can help you with what changes you are going through.

**Researcher:** What aspects of SRE do you learn more about when talking to friends?

**Son:** Just what it is like for them.

**Researcher:** Are there things that you would discuss with your friends that you would not discuss with your parents?

**Son:** No, I discuss everything with my parents (mum and step-dad), but I would rather discuss it with my friends first.

**Researcher:** Do you think that your friends know more about SRE matters than you do?

**Son:** No.

**Researcher:** Which parent do you mainly talk to about sexual matters?

**Son:** My mum.

**Researcher:** Why is it this parent (i.e. factors)?

**Son:** I don't know, but I think it is because I have known her all my life, where Brian (step-dad) I have only known for about 7 years.

**Researcher:** Why do you think the mum teaches the most about SRE, rather than your father?

**Son:** Well my real dad doesn't come around, so I suppose because I see my mum all the time I just prefer to talk to her, but then I prefer to talk to Brian about boy stuff because he is also a male so he knows what it is like.

**Researcher:** Would you prefer to discuss sexual matters with your other parent instead or as well?

**Son:** No, just my mum or step-dad.

**Researcher:** Who initiates the conversations regarding sexual matters?

**Son:** All of us have started the conversations.

**Researcher:** What SRE topics have your parents discussed with you, and at what age did these conversations occur?

**Son:** It started off when I was going through puberty. It started to get mentioned a lot more then.

**Researcher:** When and what circumstances are these conversations likely to occur?

**Son:** Anytime, really.

**Researcher:** What topics do your parents NOT discuss with you concerning SRE?

**Son:** I would discuss anything with them.

**Researcher:** Where do you think you will learn about the sexual matters if your parent's don't teach you?

**Son:** Friends.

**Researcher:** Do you think your parent's have the most up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach you about sexual matters?

**Son:** I don't know really. I think mum and Brian know a lot but about different things.

**Researcher:** Are there any restrictions on not discussing sexual matters within the family amongst yourselves?

**Son:** No.

**Researcher:** Do you feel that your family talk openly about sexual matters within the family?

**Son:** Yes.

**Researcher:** How do you think other families communicate SRE, compared to yours?

**Son:** I don't really know. My friends have never mentioned that they have talked to their parents about sex.

**Researcher:** Do you think in general more sex education is given to female children rather than male children?

**Son:** I think it is about the same.

**Researcher:** Some young males sometimes feel that fewer SRE matters are discussed with young females, but do you agree?

**Son:** No, I think lads do get information, but girls need to know more because more happens to them with periods and pregnancy.

**Researcher:** At what age do you think your parents want you to know about sexual matters?

**Son:** About 10 or 11.

**Researcher:** Do the school involve your parents in the SRE you receive?

**Son:** No, not really.

**Researcher:** Do you want your parents to have more involvement in the SRE you receive in school?

**Son:** Wouldn't really bother me.

**Researcher:** If no, how do you think the school could improve their approach to involving parents more? N/A.

**Researcher:** Would you prefer for sexual matters to be discussed more openly within the family?

**Son:** I think we discuss sex openly anyway. I don't think we could be more open.

**Researcher:** Would you have been as open answering these questions if your parents had been present?

**Son:** Yes.

**Researcher:** If yes, why?

**Son:** Because I have nothing to hide from my mum or Brian.

**Researcher:** What main forms of the media (computers, magazines etc) do you use to learn about issues regarding SRE?

**Son:** I don't know really. I don't really use the television, magazines or Internet to find stuff out. I normally find out of my friends or parents.

**Researcher:** Do you think the media act as a deterrent when showing the consequences and negativity associated with some sexual behaviours/issues?



**Son:** Yes, I think it can for people that use the media to learn about things.

**Researcher:** When using the media to learn about SRE do you feel you learn more about the opposite sex?

**Son:** I think I might have, but I learn more through talking to my friends who are girls.

**Researcher:** Do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing?

**Son:** A good thing sometimes. I think you can find out things if you watch TV and that, but you also find out daft things as well that you don't really need to know about.

**Researcher:** Do you think the religious beliefs you have been brought up with influences the SRE you receive?

**Son:** Not really sure.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Son:** It seemed alright, but I know pretty much about all that is on it.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Son:** I liked the way you could select the bits you wanted to see. If you knew about a certain thing then you had the option of going onto sections that you did not know too much about, or that you wanted to know more about.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Son:** Nothing.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Son:** I would say about 10 to 14.

**Researcher:** Was there any aspect of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Son:** No.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Son:** No, I don't think so.

**Researcher:** Would you prefer to talk to your parents rather than find out about SRE aspects by using the CD?

**Son:** Talk to my parents.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Son:** I don't think it would make any difference, not in our family anyway.

The son was asked to complete the post sexual knowledge questionnaire and the researcher went BACK ONE WEEK LATER and asked questions to gain clarity as to how the CD has broken down any barriers when discussing SRE within the family.

### **Follow-up interview with son**

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Son:** Yes, I thought it was okay, but a bit young for me.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Son:** The choice of sections.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Son:** Nothing.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Son:** Young. Probably about 9 or 10 upwards.

**Researcher:** Was there any aspects of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Son:** No.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Son:** I think we have discussed most things that I saw.

**Researcher:** Would you prefer to talk to your parents rather than find out about SRE aspects by using the CD?

**Son:** Talk to my friends or parents.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Son:** Yes, maybe. I think it would be useful in a school as well though.

The son was asked to complete the follow-up sexual knowledge questionnaire and was given a de-brief of the study. He was also thanked for his time the following questions were asked to his mother.

### **Follow-up interview with parent**

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Mother:** It seemed okay.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Mother:** There seemed a lot of choice and I liked the way it covered relationships and the different types.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Mother:** I liked all that I saw.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Mother:** 10 upwards really, especially concerning puberty aspects. I think they need to know about things before it actually happens to them.

**Researcher:** Was there any aspects of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Mother:** No.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Mother:** I don't think so.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Mother:** Possibly, but I am not sure. I think he might ask questions once you have gone.

**Researcher:** As a parent do you feel you could talk openly with your child about all aspects raised within the CD or is there things on the CD you were not aware of as a parent?

**Mother:** No because I think I am open with him already and he also asks me questions.

The mother was asked to complete the follow-up sexual knowledge questionnaire and was given a de-brief of the study. She was also thanked for taking part in the study.

**End of Interview.**

## 19<sup>th</sup> Family Interview - Stage II

**Participants:** Female parent (38 years) and daughter (14 years). No father present.

**Consent form signed and retained by the family and researcher.**

**Researcher:** Thank you. I would also like to ask if it is possible for either one of you to leave the room so I could do the first interview. Mother and daughter decided that the mother should be interviewed first. The daughter was then asked to take the demographics form and the sexual knowledge questionnaire to be completed. The researcher and the mother went to another room in the house whereby the demographics form and sexual knowledge questionnaire was completed by the mother. The researcher then started the interview process by asking the mother the following questions.

### Interview with Mother

**Researcher:** What sex and relationship education (SRE) was taught to you as a parent when you were younger?

**Mother:** None at home, but at school we had two. One of them was just girls which covered all the period stuff and the other was hilarious because it was mixed and it was just so funny. I just remember it being so basic it was untrue. You just didn't learn anything. I know I went to a Catholic school, but at the age of 11 or 12 you needed to know more than we were told.

**Researcher:** Which of your parents taught you about sexual matters, and why do you think it was this parent?

**Mother:** Neither. I know it is difficult to talk to your kids about sex because over the last year of two. I think as a parent you have this idea in your head about how you are going to approach it, but when it comes down to it you find it is just not that simple to do that. I think also it is to do with the relationship you have with your child in that up until a couple of years ago we did have quite a close relationship, but then hormones kick in and things become a little crazy so what I have found is that she is quite reluctant to talk to me and even her aunts who she used to be able to talk to about anything but she has withdrawn herself from doing that and I suppose I was the same when I was growing up. I think the only difference between me and my mum and dad is that they didn't have any sex education at school and I know my nanas would never have told them anything, I am sure.

**Researcher:** Did your own parents ever comment on the sex education that they received when they were younger?

**Mother:** Not in so many words. You just knew by the way they were that they did not know enough to teach me about it.

**Researcher:** So you don't think your parents had sufficient knowledge to teach you about sexual matters?

**Mother:** Oh god, no. I just don't think they knew how to communicate when discussing anything to do with sex and I know as a parent how difficult it can be when it is your own child.

**Researcher:** Do you feel your family talked openly about sexual matters when you were younger?

**Mother:** No, never.

**Researcher:** If no, why do you think sexual matters were not discussed more openly within your family when you were younger?

**Mother:** I think that it was just so embarrassing for them. I think as well I was always independent with lots of things in that I would find out things for myself and do things my way in that I never asked because I didn't need to, and because I think I knew more than them. I don't think my daughter thinks I know nothing, but she is similar to me in that she will find things out for herself and she won't ask for help unless she needs it. I think we are quite similar in that way, so I know why she is the way she is and like I said before the hormones take over at times and sometimes she is just so unapproachable in that if I tell her something she will disagree just for the sheer hell of it. If I say the sky is blue, she would disagree and she is also in that mind frame that she knows it all and she won't be told, but instead she will just bite my head off, so I just don't say anything unless it is really important because she pulls away. With your own kids it is really difficult in that you have to wait for the right time when she is going to talk, not when I want to sometimes. But, going back to what you asked my mum doesn't talk about sex even now. I don't know if it is because she was Catholic or if it is because it is down to the lack of education.

**Researcher:** Who taught you the most about SRE matters (i.e. mother, father, school, etc)?

**Mother:** Friends mainly, but I think you pick things up off what people say around you. Even if they were not friends lads and lasses would say things at school and you would think or yes that links on to what I already know, so I think you just piece it together as you go along. I think I learnt a lot from magazines as well.

**Researcher:** At what age was SRE taught and what topics were discussed?

**Mother:** From about 11 or 12 we got the period talk and then when I was 13 we got the sex talk, but nobody learnt anything.

**Researcher:** How and in what context was SRE taught?

**Mother:** Just in the classroom at school, no home conversations.

**Researcher:** Were there any aspects of SRE that you still wanted to know more about?

**Mother:** Probably, but I can't remember what they were, but I would just ask my older friend if I was unsure of something.

**Researcher:** What aspects of SRE do you remember still wanting to know more about?

**Mother:** I can't remember really. I think the thing I would say is that information always came later than I needed it. I mean by the time I had the period talk at school, I had started my period, so I had already had the experience before the giving of information. I think as well with having an older friend who was a year older than me helped because she would tell me things when I would ask in that when I started my period it was her I went to talk to because I knew she had also started her period, so that helped me an awful lot.

**Researcher:** With hindsight, do you think the topics associated with the SRE you were given were younger was accurate and correct?

**Mother:** Well I think you heard some things that were not true, but I knew what was true and what was untrue from my older friend.

**Researcher:** How did you find out SRE for yourself?

**Mother:** I think through magazines and my older friend. I mean I think we learnt a lot from experience in that we were both sexually active from a young age; in fact far too early. So I probably found out through probably practising sex and with her being like me we would educate each other.

**Researcher:** If through friends, do you think they knew much more than you?

**Mother:** My best friend did, but many of my peers who were the same age always seemed a bit naïve and immature compared to me. They probably learnt things from me, rather than me learn from them.

**Researcher:** Did you learn any SRE from listening to other people conversations?

**Mother:** Maybe bits, but I tending to know the facts way before my time.

**Researcher:** What age do you think you were when you felt you had adequate knowledge of SRE topics?

**Mother:** I think that is a really difficult question to answer. For all I had experiences when I was younger I think as you get older you learn more because you become a lot more ease with your body and you have different relationships that allow you to find out knew things. I don't know, I thought that when I was 16 I had a good knowledge of sex and all that went with it, but it is only as you get older that you start to see the importance of sex, but you need to be in a relationship which allows you to open up to the things that are important and you need to be in a safe relationship to be able to feel at easy to learn new things. I think as well as you get older sex is not the be-all and end-all, but it special when it occurs in the right relationship. But I don't think this can be taught, I think this is something that happens to you as you get older, have children of your own and find where you are physically, mentally and emotionally with you life and where you want to go. I think when you are younger you are like a beach ball just bouncing from one thing to the next, but when you get older I think you steer the direction and that is when you experience the other things that are important in sexual relationships, especially as your body is changing.

**Researcher:** With hindsight, do you think you knew enough sex education at your different developmental stages to prepare you for adult life?

**Mother:** Not at all.

**Researcher:** If you look back to the SRE that was taught when you were younger, how do you think it could have been improved to provide you with the information you wanted or needed at the time?

**Mother:** If there had been more than two half hour sessions that would have been useful. I think you know certain information you need to know at each stage in your life and it is different with me being brought up Catholic. Sex is seen as bad and you only have sex when you are married and when you want a baby. There is no pleasure aspect. I think that sex is a good thing and yes it is okay to have it, but the way I was brought up '*Sex was wrong*', when it is not. It is like giving birth in the fact that it is the most natural thing to do, but it just has to be right for that person. I think the sex education I had was really bad, but I think it could have been improved if it was given on a more regular basis and not with rights and wrongs attached. It is up to the person to decide what is right or wrong.

**Researcher:** Would you have preferred for SRE matters to have been discussed more openly within the family when you were younger?

**Mother:** Yes, I would have preferred it, but there are just certain things my family don't talk about. I am not saying that I had a bad childhood because I didn't, I had a lovely childhood, but the subject of '*SEX*' was just not part of what was proper and correct to mention and I do blame my mothers religious beliefs for that, but I just had to learn about it for myself, but yes I would have preferred for her to talk to me more about it.

**Researcher:** Do you think that if the SRE taught to you had been discussed more openly you would feel more comfortable talking to your children about sexual matters?

**Mother:** I think it would have given me some experience about the best ways to go about discussing sex with my children, but like I say nothing would help with my daughter at the moment because she knows it all and there is no talking to her.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the SRE that was taught, compared with today's teaching?

**Mother:** I think there is a lot more information available these days, so I know she already has quite a lot of the facts in the way she talks and expresses herself, but she doesn't choose to talk to me and that is fine. I know the school are a lot more informative in the sex education they give compared to how I was taught coming from a Catholic back-ground.

**Researcher:** How was sex discussed when you were younger and why do you think it was discussed in this way (i.e. embarrassment?)

**Mother:** It just wasn't discussed because it was naughty and wrong and I disagree with that which is why neither of my children have been christened and they don't want to attend church, which is also fine. My brother and I were brought up with this strict upbringing and neither of us have been part of the Catholic world since we had a choice. I don't think we are embarrassed as our parents were to talk about or have sex, and consequently we want our children to have their own beliefs and not those that are pushed upon them.

**Researcher:** Do you as a parent feel you have the up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach your child about sexual matters?

**Mother:** Yes, I think from my job I am kept up-to-date about sexual matters. I feel happy talking to her about things, it is just I am not the person she would most like to talk to at the moment because she is private and will only ask or talk to me about the things that suit her. So I feel I do have the knowledge and she knows that it is just at what she is going through now with hormones and things, I think she just wants to find out the information for herself.

**Researcher:** May I ask what SRE has been taught to your children?

**Mother:** I can only go by what she has told me. I know she has had the periods talk and she has learnt about sex and how a baby is made, but I don't know when these lessons occur or how frequent they are. I know for all she can be reluctant to talk to me she does access things from the Internet, which I don't mind because I know what she is looking at and with it being in the home. I think it is the right forum encase she did want to ask me something.

**Researcher:** What size of group was SRE taught in and was is it mixed or single-sex group?

**Mother:** I don't know.

**Researcher:** Do you know if signposting was given to say where they could get further information or advice?

**Mother:** No, I don't.

**Researcher:** Who has taught SRE to your children (i.e. mother, father, school, etc)?

**Mother:** I think possibly school and friends.

**Researcher:** Why do you think she prefers to learn about sexual matters from this people (Is it possible due to being the same sex?)?

**Mother:** I think just the embarrassment thing of talking to me. I think she thinks that I do not do sex and I think it disgusts her to think of me possibly having a sexual loving relationship.

**Researcher:** At what age was SRE taught to your children and what topics were discussed?

**Mother:** I think probably about 11. I think before that time she has always had the opportunity to read about the body from a book that I bought her and I think that has helped, but I don't think the topic of sex came up until she was about 11.

**Researcher:** Who initiated the discussion of SRE?

**Mother:** I don't think I have initiated many of the conversations, but I have noticed over the last year she has become more sexually interested, especially since having a proper boyfriend. It is only since then I have really started to try and talk to her about things because before that she wasn't interested and I didn't want to push her into talking about things she didn't want to, but up until about a year ago she would ask me things, but since getting a boyfriend the shutters have come down and I am not allowed a key to enter, so I have to do it carefully.

**Researcher:** Was it embarrassing for you as a parent to discuss sexual matters with your child?

**Mother:** No, if she wanted to that is fine. I am more conscious now because she has a boyfriend and maybe she doesn't want to talk to me, but I am not embarrassed to talk about anything with her, but it has to be on her terms, unless I think there is some urgency, but I do trust her and I know she is safe and she knows she can talk to me. I can't force myself on her, but I would just like to be there for her encase she does need me.

**Researcher:** After discussions, what aspects of SRE do you think your children still wanted to know more about?

**Mother:** We don't discuss things, but I know she accesses the BBC sexual health website and she reads magazines on a regular basis, so I think she picks things up from there that she is not too sure about.

**Researcher:** Who would you like to teach your children about sexual matters?

**Mother:** People that go into the school who are more equipped to deal with sexual matters from young peoples points of view. I think adolescents respond well to people who have all the knowledge and who they are not going to see against once they have asked questions that they might be embarrassed to talk to their parents about.

**Researcher:** Why, and what is the reason for this? AS ABOVE.

**Researcher:** What sorts of sexual matters do you think your child/ren discuss with their friends?

**Mother:** I know they are talking about how they are feeling and what each of them has done; more in a gossip way I suppose, but I think it is a healthy process to talk to friends and learn about sexual things even if the information is not as accurate as if they were

talking to adults. I think it is just a way of exploring who you want to be, which helps form your own identity.

**Researcher:** Are these friends of the same or opposite sex?

**Mother:** She has a boyfriend and she also has friends who are male and female.

**Researcher:** Why do you think your children want to talk to their friends about sexual matters?

**Mother:** I think it is because the people you choose to be your friends are similar to you and because you share the same feelings and interested you tend to understand each other more.

**Researcher:** What aspects of SRE do you think they learn more about when talking to their friends?

**Mother:** Almost anything and everything.

**Researcher:** Do you think your child will discuss some sexual matters with her friends that they would not talk to you about?

**Mother:** I think she already does because she finds it embarrassing to talk to me.

**Researcher:** If yes, why and what sorts of things do you think they discuss?

**Mother:** I would think sex, how to do it, when to do it, contraception, everything really.

**Researcher:** Which parent mainly talks to their children about sexual matters?

**Mother:** Me if she did want to talk to either parent because she doesn't see her dad.

**Researcher:** Why is it this parent (i.e. factors)?

**Mother:** Because she doesn't see her dad.

**Researcher:** Why do you think they prefer to talk to this parent about sexual matters (Is it possible due to being the same sex)?

**Mother:** I don't think she prefers to, I just think that she wouldn't have the opportunity to speak to her dad because he lives in America.

**Researcher:** Who initiates the conversations regarding sexual matters?

**Mother:** I would say in the past it has been me that has approached the conversations, but then the wall comes up and she doesn't want to talk to me about it.

**Researcher:** What topics do parents discuss with their children, and at what age? Is it different for sons and daughters?

**Mother:** I have always said to her that she can talk to me about sex or anything, but in the past before hormones kicked in I talked to her about periods and things relating to sex, so for all we don't talk about what she is experiencing personally NOW, we have talked in the past and I think that gave her the basis to find out more at her own pace and then the boyfriend came along and she now wants to be '*I know it all, you know nothing*'. This is the type of attitude she has at the moment, but I know she will go through this developmental stage and that she can feel comfortable talking to me again.

**Researcher:** When and what circumstances are these conversations likely to occur?

**Mother:** Just when she is alone in her personal space. I tend to pick my moments carefully because I know the reaction in the past, but I tend to wait until it is just me and her and then I will go in and talk to her in general and then make my move when I think she is relaxed enough and that I can talk to her without her getting embarrassed and walking away.

**Researcher:** What topics do parents NOT discuss with their children?

**Mother:** I don't think there are things that I wouldn't, but it is more about what she wants to discuss with me.



**Researcher:** Where do you think your child will learn about the sexual matters if you don't teach them?

**Mother:** Schools and friends.

**Researcher:** Are there any restrictions on not discussing sexual matters within the family amongst yourselves?

**Mother:** No.

**Researcher:** Do you feel that your family talk openly about sexual matters within the family?

**Mother:** No, but it is not through the point of trying.

**Researcher:** How do you think other families communicate SRE, compared to yours?

**Mother:** I think all families are different in that I know families that are similar to ours when talking about sex, but then I know families who are really open. I think it doesn't just depend on the parent, but also the child and because we all have different individual experiences and thoughts it makes it very difficult to say this is how all families should discuss sexual matters.

**Researcher:** Do you think in general more sex education is given to female children rather than male children?

**Mother:** No, but I think the topics that are generally covered affect girls more than they do boys, so the topics are steered very much about what girls are most likely to experience.

**Researcher:** At what age do you want your children to know about sexual matters?

**Mother:** I think at an age when she is most likely to understand.

**Researcher:** Do the school involve parents in the educating of the children?

**Mother:** I don't think they do what they should do. I know they sent a letter home to say they were teaching sex education, but it wasn't detailed.

**Researcher:** If no, how do you think the school could improve their approach to involving parents more?

**Mother:** I think they could tell us more about what and when they are covering certain topics when going to parents evening, which would give parents the opportunity to ask questions.

**Researcher:** So do you think that as a parent if you knew more about what was being taught and when it is taught that this would strengthen the relationship with your children when discussing sexual matters within the home environment?

**Mother:** I don't know if we would talk more, but it would give me a better understanding of where she is at in knowledge terms instead of me having to ask questions to try and find out what she actually does know. I think if I knew what they school had covered I would be able to add to it, but it is difficult to do this when I don't know what they have taught her and bringing into the fact that she can be very reluctant to talk makes it very difficult. I do have an idea of what she does know but that is only through what she says to her friends and boyfriend and by what she is looked at on the Internet.

**Researcher:** What main forms of the media (computers, magazines etc) do your children use to learn about issues regarding SRE?

**Mother:** The Internet, magazines, TV.

**Researcher:** What sorts of things do you think they learn from these sources that they do not get taught about elsewhere?

**Mother:** Well I think it is quite explicit things because even in magazines that at targeted at her age group can be quite informative, but these are the type of magazines they are all wanting, especially for the problem pages or for the free lipstick that comes with them.

**Researcher:** Do you think they prefer to use these sources to learn about SRE?

**Mother:** Yes, I think she prefers to figure out things for herself because that is the type of person she is.

**Researcher:** What impact do you think the media (computers, magazines, etc) have on adolescents regarding the SRE that they learn?

**Mother:** I think they have a huge impact.

**Researcher:** Do you think the media act as a deterrent when showing the consequences and negativity associated with some sexual behaviours/issues?

**Mother:** Definitely, especially with teenage pregnancy.

**Researcher:** When your children use the media to learn about sexual matters do you feel they use these because they can relate to what they are being told about?

**Mother:** Yes, some of the time.

**Researcher:** When your children use the media, do you think they learn more about the opposite sex?

**Mother:** Definitely.

**Researcher:** Do you think your children feel more confident with the knowledge they have learnt from the different media types they view and read?

**Mother:** Yes because it allows them to think about why they behave in a certain way and knows the reasons behind why they do things.

**Researcher:** Do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing?

**Mother:** I think it can be both. I think it depends the child's understanding and education in that if you have a child who is not so knowledgeable the messages being given to young people can lead them in the wrong direction, but if the child is knowledgeable and has an understanding of sexual matters the media can add to that in a way that positive messages can be reinforced. I also think the media can excel in that they cover a lot more topics than when I was younger and I can only see that as a good thing because I have first hand experience of the negative aspects of those topics not being discussed.

**Researcher:** Do you think the parent's religion impacts on the SRE they give to their children?

**Mother:** Obviously.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Mother:** I think it is good and very informative.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Mother:** I liked the 'buzzwords' was good because it allows them to learn about the correct terminology as well as the slang words.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Mother:** There wasn't anything really.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Mother:** 11 upwards.

**Researcher:** Was there any aspects of the CD that you would feel uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Mother:** No.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Mother:** Yes, plenty, but not through the point of trying to discuss topics.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Mother:** Yes.

**Researcher:** As a parent do you feel you could talk openly with your child about all aspects raised within the CD or is there things on the CD you were not aware of as a parent?

**Mother:** Yes.

### **Interview with Daughter**

**Researcher:** What sex and relationship education (SRE) has been taught to you?

**Daughter:** We have watched videos and questions on sex that we have done in our form groups and then there has been side lessons where people have come in to do further talks.

**Researcher:** What size of group is SRE taught in and is it mixed or single-sex?

**Daughter:** About 25 kids with both boys and girls together.

**Researcher:** Is this an ideal setting or would you prefer different sizes of groups and gender when being taught SRE? If different, how?

**Daughter:** Don't mind.

**Researcher:** Was signposting given to say where you get further information or advice?

**Daughter:** We had a roadshow where they gave out numbers and websites where you could go for more information or if you wanted advice.

**Researcher:** Do you know where to go for contraceptive and sexual health advice?

**Daughter:** No.

**Researcher:** Who has taught you the most about the SRE (i.e. mother, father, school, etc)?

**Daughter:** School.

**Researcher:** Why do you prefer to talk to this person about sex (Is it possible due to being the same sex?)?

**Daughter:** I think it is good that school teaches you, but it is better when outside people come in because they have a greater understanding of what they are talking about.

**Researcher:** At what age was SRE first taught and what topics were discussed?

**Daughter:** Year 6 when I was 10 or 11.

**Researcher:** Who initiated the discussion of SRE?

**Daughter:** The teacher.

**Researcher:** If the parent, why do you think they told you about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** I don't talk to my parents about sexual matters.

**Researcher:** Was it embarrassing to discuss sexual matters?

**Daughter:** Yes.

**Researcher:** What topics are embarrassing to talk about? (e.g. relationships)

**Daughter:** Everything that is personal.

**Researcher:** Why do you get embarrassed talking about these topics?

**Daughter:** Because I prefer to keep it to myself.

**Researcher:** After discussions, what aspects of SRE did you still want to know more about?

**Daughter:** None.

**Researcher:** Who would you like to teach you about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** I prefer school.

**Researcher:** Why, what is the reason for this?

**Daughter:** I don't know. Maybe because they just give the information, but don't ask anything personal.

**Researcher:** Do you think that you pick things up from other people's conversations regarding SRE?

**Daughter:** Yes.

**Researcher:** What sorts of sexual matters do you discuss with friends?

**Daughter:** Anything really.

**Researcher:** Are these friends of the same or opposite sex?

**Daughter:** Same, but I do talk to my boyfriend.

**Researcher:** What makes you want to talk to your friends about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** They understand and know what I am going through.

**Researcher:** What aspects of SRE do you learn more about when talking to friends?

**Daughter:** I don't know if you learn, you just get a better understanding of what you already know.

**Researcher:** Are there things that you would discuss with your friends that you would not discuss with your parents?

**Daughter:** Yes.

**Researcher:** Do you think that your friends know more about SRE matters than you do?

**Daughter:** The same.

**Researcher:** Which parent do you mainly talk to about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** Neither.

**Researcher:** Why do you think the mum teaches the most about SRE, rather than your father?

**Daughter:** She doesn't because we don't talk about it.

**Researcher:** Why do you prefer to talk to this parent about sexual matters (Is it possible due to being the same sex?)?

**Daughter:** I don't.

**Researcher:** Who is most likely to initiate the conversations regarding sexual matters?

**Daughter:** Mother.

**Researcher:** What SRE topics have your parents discussed with you, and at what age did these conversations occur?

**Daughter:** I haven't.

**Researcher:** What topics do your parents NOT discuss with you concerning SRE?

**Daughter:** Everything, because it is private.

**Researcher:** Where do you think you will learn about the sexual matters if your parents don't teach you?

**Daughter:** Friends and school.

**Researcher:** Do you think your parents have the most up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach you about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** Yes, but it makes me feel sick talking to my mum about sex.

**Researcher:** Do you feel that your family talks openly about sexual matters within the family?

**Daughter:** We would if she had her choice, but I prefer just not to talk about it.

**Researcher:** How do you think other families communicate SRE, compared to yours?

**Daughter:** I don't know.

**Researcher:** Do you think in general more sex education is given to female children rather than male children?

**Daughter:** No, the same.

**Researcher:** Some young males sometimes feel that fewer SRE matters are discussed with young females, but do you agree?

**Daughter:** We get the same.

**Researcher:** At what age do you think your parents want you to know about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** Don't know.

**Researcher:** Do the school involve your parents in the SRE you receive?

**Daughter:** Not at secondary school, but at primary school they did.

**Researcher:** Do you want your parents to have more involvement in the SRE you receive in school?

**Daughter:** No.

**Researcher:** Would you prefer for sexual matters to be discussed more openly within the family?

**Daughter:** No.

**Researcher:** Would you have been as open answering these questions if your parents had been present?

**Daughter:** No, I am sorry I would not have taken part.

**Researcher:** What main forms of the media (computers, magazines etc) do you use to learn about issues regarding SRE?

**Daughter:** I have been on the BBC website and I read problem pages in magazines.

**Researcher:** What sorts of things do you learn from these sources that you do not get taught about elsewhere?

**Daughter:** Stuff about what it is like for other people.

**Researcher:** Do you prefer to use these sources to learn about SRE?

**Daughter:** Yes, because you can learn about the things you don't know much about.

**Researcher:** If so, why? AS ABOVE.

**Daughter:** A big impact.

**Researcher:** Do you think the media act as a deterrent when showing the consequences and negativity associated with some sexual behaviours/issues?

**Daughter:** Yes because it makes you think about what you don't want for yourself, but I am not sure it stops boys and girls doing what they want to do.

**Researcher:** When reading magazines, watching TV, videos and other media types do you feel that you can relate to what you are reading about or watching?

**Daughter:** Yes, with boys when you have split up with them or something like that.

**Researcher:** When using the media to learn about SRE do you feel you learn more about the opposite sex?

**Daughter:** Sometimes, but if I want to know something from a lads point of view I would just ask them.

**Researcher:** Do you feel more confident with the knowledge you have learnt when using the different media types?

**Daughter:** No.

**Researcher:** Do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing?

**Daughter:** Good and bad in that it can show what you don't want to happen to you, but good in that it gives you information that you might need but don't want to ask people about.

**Researcher:** Do you think the religious beliefs you have been brought up with influences the SRE you receive?

**Daughter:** Yes, but it doesn't bother me because I am not part of any religion.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Daughter:** It was good, yes.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Daughter:** It was colourful.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Daughter:** None.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Daughter:** 13 or 14.

**Researcher:** Was there any aspect of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Daughter:** Yes, the things about girls.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Daughter:** Yes.

**Researcher:** Would you prefer to talk to your parents rather than find out about SRE aspects by using the CD?

**Daughter:** Use the CD.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Daughter:** Yes.

Before leaving the mother and her daughter were asked to complete the post sexual knowledge questionnaire. The research went BACK ONE WEEK LATER and asked questions to gain clarity as to how the CD has broken down any barriers when discussing SRE within the family.

### **Follow-up interview with daughter**

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Daughter:** It was good in that it wasn't too child like.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Daughter:** I think it looked interesting.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Daughter:** No.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Daughter:** 13 upwards.

**Researcher:** Was there any aspects of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Daughter:** Female stuff and relationships.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Daughter:** Yes.

**Researcher:** Would you prefer to talk to your parents rather than find out about SRE aspects by using the CD?

**Daughter:** No, use the CD.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Daughter:** Yes, I do but just not in my family.

The daughter was given a de-brief of the study and asked to complete the follow-up sexual knowledge questionnaire. She was also thanked for her time and the mother was asked the following questions.

### **Follow-up interview with parent**

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Mother:** I liked it and I hope she had a good look at it since she won't talk to me.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Mother:** I think the amount of choice that was available was really good.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Mother:** There wasn't any.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Mother:** I think I said 11 before, but now looking at it some aspects on the body would be good for late primary school.

**Researcher:** Was there any aspects of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Mother:** I wouldn't, but I think my daughter would.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Mother:** Yes, quite a bit unfortunately.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Mother:** Yes, but you need both parents and their child to actually want to discuss it.

**Researcher:** As a parent do you feel you could talk openly with your child about all aspects raised within the CD or is there things on the CD you were not aware of as a parent?

**Mother:** No, because of my job I think I am quite knowledgeable, but I am just not the person my daughter feels comfortable with when talking about sex, so I just have to make sure she is getting the correct information from elsewhere.

The mother was asked to complete the follow-up sexual knowledge questionnaire before being thanked for her time and being given a de-brief of the study.

**End of Interview.**

## 20<sup>th</sup> Family Interview - Stage II

**Participants:** Female parent (44 years) and daughter (15 years). Absent father.

**Consent form signed and retained by the family and researcher.**

**Researcher:** Thank you. I would also like to ask if it is possible for either one of you to leave the room so I could do the first interview. Mother and daughter decided that the mother should be interviewed first. The daughter was then asked to complete the demographics form and the sexual knowledge questionnaire. The researcher and the mother went to another room in the house whereby she completed the demographics form and the sexual knowledge questionnaire. The researcher then started the interview process by asking the mother the following questions.

### Interview with Mother

**Researcher:** What sex and relationship education (SRE) was taught to you as a parent when you were younger?

**Mother:** It was first year seniors and I think it the basics in your biology lesson. It was just about periods, what sex was and I think they are taught a lot more today. We just got the basic facts.

**Researcher:** Which of your parents taught you about sexual matters, and why do you think it was this parent?

**Mother:** Neither of them. My dad was always working, but my mum just didn't discuss it and was happy to leave it with the school. I think it was very embarrassing for them, where these days I don't think it is. I think as well you see where your parents went wrong and I don't want that with my children.

**Researcher:** Did your own parents ever comment on the sex education that they received when they were younger?

**Mother:** No.

**Researcher:** With hindsight, do you think your parents had sufficient knowledge to teach you about sexual matters?

**Mother:** No, I don't think so, because I don't think they wouldn't of been taught much either from when they were at school.

**Researcher:** Do you feel your family talked openly about sexual matters when you were younger?

**Mother:** No, I think just because of the embarrassment factor.

**Researcher:** Who taught you the most about SRE matters (i.e. mother, father, school, etc)?

**Mother:** I think it is just over the years when you have learnt from your friends and then when you start work you start to learn from your colleagues. I think the job I was in when I left school was with older women, so they didn't really discuss it, but then my second job I was with people my own age and I think I also learnt things from them that I didn't learn from when I was younger and when I was at school.

**Researcher:** At what age was SRE taught and what topics were discussed?

**Mother:** About 12 or so when you just got told the very basic information that you can find in books.

**Researcher:** How and in what context was SRE taught?

**Mother:** Just in biology class.

**Researcher:** Were there any aspects of SRE that you still wanted to know more about?

**Mother:** No, I think you just accepted what you were told and you didn't question. You never took it further because it was just not something you did until you were married and at the age of 12/13



you just accepted what you had been taught and that was that. I think the way it was taught it was just like any other lesson, not a time to ask questions like they are encouraged to do these days.

**Researcher:** With hindsight, do you think the topics associated with the SRE you were given were younger was accurate and correct?

**Mother:** A bit of both really.

**Researcher:** How did you find out SRE for yourself?

**Mother:** Just from magazines and learning from the things peers would say.

**Researcher:** If through friends, do you think they knew much more than you?

**Mother:** I think they possibly did when I was a teenager.

**Researcher:** Did you learn any SRE from listening to other people conversations?

**Mother:** Yes, I think everybody does. More so these days because sex is more openly discussed.

**Researcher:** What age do you think you were when you felt you had adequate knowledge of SRE topics?

**Mother:** About 24 when you have learnt the information and you can put it into a serious relationship. I don't think you ever know it all, but I think as you become older you become more comfortable with yourself and it is only when you are asked a question that you know how much or how little you know. I mean with my daughter it is more about advising her on relationships and how to look after herself, not necessarily the facts, but I do feel I would be able to talk to her about most if not all the topics she could come up with.

**Researcher:** With hindsight, do you think you knew enough sex education at your different developmental stages to prepare you for adult life?

**Mother:** I think when we were younger we got the basic information, but we never covered things like emotions, feelings or relationships like they do now. I think because of this it was sometimes difficult to put the facts that we were given into some type of context. It was just an act that never meant anything because it didn't cover the fuller picture, which is to me more important than the act.

**Researcher:** If you look back to the SRE that was taught when you were younger, how do you think it could have been improved to provide you with the information you wanted or needed at the time?

**Mother:** Well like I say it could have covered more topics and been more informative if it was taught something similar to how it is taught today.

**Researcher:** Would you have preferred for SRE matters to have been discussed more openly within the family when you were younger?

**Mother:** Probably, but it would never have been discussed like me and my daughter talk so I don't know how useful it would have been at the time when I was younger.

**Researcher:** Do you think that if the SRE taught to you had been discussed more openly you would feel more comfortable talking to your children about sexual matters?

**Mother:** No, I just look back and think I want better for my children and I want that closeness, which I think I have got which allows them to talk to me about things, but I didn't have that with my mother.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the SRE that was taught, compared with today's teaching?

**Mother:** I think it is a lot better in that she will know a lot more at 15 years than I did and that because all the information is there they can make decisions and choices on their own, which I think is good in that it allows them to be their own person and find out who they want to be even if the consequence is that they grow-up quicker. I think they do grow-up quicker these days and they have to be far more aware of things than we had to, so I think the teaching they get on sex is far more informative and does prepare them more than I think we were prepared because we didn't get the information that was needed.

**Researcher:** How was sex discussed when you were younger and why do you think it was discussed in this way (i.e. embarrassment?)?

**Mother:** I think it was an embarrassing topic in general and if people talked about sex, it was almost like it was being promoted.

**Researcher:** Do you as a parent feel you have the up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach your child about sexual matters?

**Mother:** Yes, I think that I can hold my own if either of them asked me anything.

**Researcher:** May I ask what sex and relationship education (SRE) has been taught to your children?

**Mother:** It is only what she has told me, but it seems like they get the information reinforced at the different stages. I do know she has been taught about sex, periods, contraception, relationships and the different types. I think pretty much everything has been taught, but then it is re-capped again at another time so if they didn't understand something first time around, then more information is given when they cover it again. I think it is good what they have covered.

**Researcher:** What size of group was SRE taught in and was it mixed or single-sex group?

**Mother:** Mixed in a class of about 20-30.

**Researcher:** Do you know if signposting was given to say where they could get further information or advice?

**Mother:** Well I have always said to her to come to me, but I think she has got websites that the school have given her.

**Researcher:** Who has taught SRE to your children (i.e. mother, father, school, etc)?

**Mother:** The school, but then I have added on to it and I also talked to her when she was younger before she got taught sex education at school. I think I talked to her quite a lot before she got sex education at school because otherwise that goes back to the situation of my parents, but I knew she knew the basics before being taught more at school.

**Researcher:** Why do you think they prefer to learn about sexual matters from this person (Is it possible due to being the same sex?)?

**Mother:** I am not quite sure who she prefers to talk to. I think she is happy to learn the information from school and then ask more if she is unsure about something, but she is quite bright. It is our son we will need to talk to more to help him understand.

**Researcher:** At what age was SRE taught to your children and what topics were discussed?

**Mother:** I think it can be from when she first gets a doll and wants to dress it up and then that question most parents dread '*Where do babies come from?*' I think because I was honest and answered her correctly she knew she could always ask more. She was about 6 or 7 I think, but then she didn't ask much after that but I think that formed the basis for future conversations in that she knew I would always tell her the truth.

**Researcher:** Who initiated the discussion of SRE?

**Mother:** She asked me, that time.

**Researcher:** Was it embarrassing for you as a parent to discuss sexual matters with your child?

**Mother:** No, I think I may have been nervous because I didn't know how she would handle the information, but I wasn't embarrassed and I don't think she was either. It is funny a couple of months ago she mentioned asking that question when she was younger. I didn't think she would remember, but that's kids for you, they know and remember a lot more than parents think they do.

**Researcher:** After discussions, what aspects of SRE do you think your child/ren still want to know more about?

**Mother:** I don't think there is because she would just simply ask.

**Researcher:** Who would you like to teach your children about sexual matters?

**Mother:** I think it has to start with the parents. I have always said they can come and talk to me about anything, and I know that they can and do. I also wanted to make sure they could go to their father also which his why my husband initiated the conversation with our son, because I think our son needed that reinforcement that he could go to his dad as well as me. They both talk to me anyway, but they also know they can talk to their dad, even though he may not always be here as often as me. So I think it is making that point well known within the family and then the school also need to give them the education and then they can come back to us if they want to.

**Researcher:** Why, and what is the reason for this?

**Mother:** Simply because like I said before I don't want it to be like it was for me when I was younger.

**Researcher:** What sorts of sexual matters do you think your children discuss with their friends?

**Mother:** I think it is how they are feeling and the things they are experiencing.

**Researcher:** Are these friends of the same or opposite sex?

**Mother:** I think she will mainly talk to the same sex friends, but I also know she has friends of the opposite sex.

**Researcher:** Why do you think your children want to talk to their friends about sexual matters?

**Mother:** I don't know if they necessarily do at times, I just think it is more widely spoken about so they just talk about what they know but in a general way.

**Researcher:** What aspects of SRE do you think they learn more about when talking to their friends?

**Mother:** Well at the moment ... and I don't know if I am off the mark here, I can't imagine a lot of them have had sex, but I think it is like I said before more about the feelings and I suppose that will add confirmation to how she is feeling when she knows her friends are probably feeling the same way.

**Researcher:** Do you think your child will discuss some sexual matters with her friends that they would not talk to you about?

**Mother:** It would not surprise me, but it wouldn't bother me either.

**Researcher:** If yes, why and what sorts of things do you think they discuss?

**Mother:** I don't know ... boys, relationships, periods, etc. I think it can be anything and everything.

**Researcher:** Which parent mainly talks to their children about sexual matters?

**Mother:** Mainly me.

**Researcher:** Why is it this parent (i.e. factors)?

**Mother:** Probably because I am always here and I do ask and talk to her about things.

**Researcher:** If Mother – why do you think the mum teaches the most about SRE, rather than your father?

**Mother:** I am not quite sure. I don't know if it is that my husband is not in until 7pm that it comes down to me to talk about it, but he has talked to our son about it. I have as well but I think mothers and daughters can have a more trusting relationship and can share a lot more with being of the same sex, in that they understand each other. I don't know if that has something to do with it.

**Researcher:** Why do you think they prefer to talk to this parent about sexual matters (Is it possible due to being the same sex?)?

**Mother:** I think because we are both females, but also because I talk to her about things and she wants to talk to me. I know she had been out with her boyfriend last week and when she came home I was in bed reading and she came up and sat on the edge of the bed. I asked if she was alright and whether she had had a good time. She then just came and got into the bed for a cuddle and she cried for the next twenty minutes because they had finished. Now why she didn't just go to her room and cry by herself I don't know, I think she just prefers to share things with me. I feel it is quite an

honour, but at the same time that is the way I have always been with her in the fact that I do openly discuss things with her, so that might be why she did it, but I think we are quite close anyway.

**Researcher:** Who initiates the conversations regarding sexual matters?

**Mother:** I used to say me, but she also asks me things.

**Researcher:** What topics do parents discuss with their children, and at what age and is it different for sons and daughters?

**Mother:** Well, like I said we have discussed babies when she was younger, but I think that opened up the gate to say we can talk about anything, anytime.

**Researcher:** When and what circumstances are these conversations likely to occur?

**Mother:** I don't think there are any particular times, it is just if she wants to talk or I need to inform her of something.

**Researcher:** What topics do parents NOT discuss with their children?

**Mother:** There is nothing we wouldn't discuss.

**Researcher:** Where do you think your child will learn about the sexual matters if you don't teach them?

**Mother:** School and friends.

**Researcher:** Are there any restrictions on not discussing sexual matters within the family amongst yourselves?

**Mother:** No.

**Researcher:** Do you feel that your family talk openly about sexual matters within the family?

**Mother:** Yes, I think we do.

**Researcher:** How do you think other families communicate SRE, compared to yours?

**Mother:** I don't know. I think some families are open, but I think there are other families who are not.

**Researcher:** Do you think in general more sex education is given to female children rather than male children?

**Mother:** I think it is steered more towards girls, but I think boys also need to know what it is like for girls, just as I think it is important girls need to know what it is like for boys.

**Researcher:** At what age do you want your children to know about sexual matters?

**Mother:** I think it is important for them to know at a time that is right for them in that I know our son is a young 11 and I don't think he would have the knowledge she had when she was his age simply because he is too busy doing boy stuff still and with not reaching puberty yet, it is something he is not concerned with, but I know that over the next year we will have to talk about it to prepare him, because he can't be a child for ever, but with our daughter she wanted to know things and so I told her, so to a certain extent I let them steer it, until there comes a time when I think they need to know something. This is not to do with age, this is to do with knowing the information so they are prepared.

**Researcher:** Do the school involve parents in the educating of the children?

**Mother:** I think in secondary they teach sex education as just part of a lesson, but I think before the term starts they need to be sending a detailed letter home to say exactly what they are covering and when they plan on teaching it.

**Researcher:** So do you think that as a parent if you knew more about what was being taught and when it is taught that this would strengthen the relationship with you children when discussing sexual matters within the home environment?

**Mother:** No, I don't think it would strengthen it, but I would like to know when she is being taught things so I can be prepared and so I can talk to her, just encase she ever felt she couldn't mention

something to me. I don't think it is likely to happen with her, but I am not sure how our son will be when he gets the sex education at school. We will have to wait and see.

**Researcher:** What main forms of the media (computers, magazines etc) do your children use to learn about issues regarding SRE?

**Mother:** Magazines and television.

**Researcher:** What sorts of things do you think they learn from these sources that they do not get taught about elsewhere?

**Mother:** I think it is mainly to do with relationships that she will focus upon, but I think she will also see and read about other things she has covered in sex education classes such as pregnancy, contraception and things like that.

**Researcher:** Do you think they prefer to use these sources to learn about SRE?

**Mother:** I don't mind because I don't think they will teach her about anything major that she does not already know.

**Researcher:** What impact do you think the media (computers, magazines, etc) have on adolescents regarding the SRE that they learn?

**Mother:** I think it will be quite a lot.

**Researcher:** Do you think the media act as a deterrent when showing the consequences and negativity associated with some sexual behaviours/issues?

**Mother:** I think it can, but I think it is down to the individual by how much of an influence it might have.

**Researcher:** When your children use the media to learn about sexual matters do you feel they use these because they can relate to what they are being told about?

**Mother:** I think they do relate to what they see in the media, yes.

**Researcher:** When your children use the media, do you think they learn more about the opposite sex?

**Mother:** Yes.

**Researcher:** Do you think your children feel more confident with the knowledge they have learnt from the different media types they view and read?

**Mother:** I think everybody feels more confident with knowledge on a topic area, so yes.

**Researcher:** Do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing?

**Mother:** I think it is a good thing, and a bad thing. I think it is the only way you are going to get the information across, but I think it can be a bad thing if young people do not have the basic knowledge and understanding to put it into context and take it forward. There are always pros and cons with everything, but I think the media impact can be an individual thing depending on a range of factors that I have already mentioned.

**Researcher:** Do you think the parent's religion impacts on the SRE they give to their children?

**Mother:** I wouldn't have said it has affected us, but I think it must if you are strictly religious, but I wouldn't know.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Mother:** I thought it was good with what I have seen.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Mother:** I thought the consequences and communication aspects were really good.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Mother:** There is nothing at the moment, even though the fly was annoying, but they have to make it different somehow.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Mother:** I think 14 or 15 would be fine, but other parts could be shown earlier like body parts because that is shown taught in primary school.

**Researcher:** Were there any aspects of the CD that you would feel uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Mother:** No.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Mother:** I know we have talked about relationships and the different types, but I don't think we have discussed it in such detail that the CD covers where it shows to boys liking each other. I don't think we have also discussed emergency contraception in such detail either.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Mother:** I do, but I think if the school sent a CD like this home with the child and get the parent to sign to say they have watched it together, then I think that would highlight some of the issues that need to be discussed in more detail, not just at school but home as well.

**Researcher:** As a parent do you feel you could talk openly with your child about all aspects raised within the CD or is there things on the CD you were not aware of as a parent?

**Mother:** No, I don't think so.

### **Interview with Daughter**

**Researcher:** What sex and relationship education (SRE) has been taught to you?

**Daughter:** In year 6 we had a video on periods, but that didn't teach us anything we didn't already know. The in year 7 we had a re-cap of that and then in year 9 we had a sex education roadshow where they came in and told us about puberty, sex, body parts, contraception, STIs and relationships and then in year 10 we had sex education in our biology class, which reinforced what we had been told at the roadshow.

**Researcher:** What size of group is SRE taught in and is it mixed or single-sex?

**Daughter:** In year 6 it was single, but after that it was just mixed.

**Researcher:** Is this an ideal setting or would you prefer different sizes of groups and gender when being taught SRE? If different, how?

**Daughter:** No, I prefer being in a mixed class because you learn what it is like for both males and females.

**Researcher:** Was signposting given to say where you get further information or advice?

**Daughter:** We were given booklets and things like that from the roadshow.

**Researcher:** Do you know where to go for contraceptive and sexual health advice?

**Daughter:** If I needed to, yes.

**Researcher:** Who has taught you the most about the SRE (i.e. mother, father, school, etc)?

**Daughter:** Mainly my mum.

**Researcher:** Why do you prefer to talk to this person about sex (Is it possible due to being the same sex?)?

**Daughter:** Just because we are closer.

**Researcher:** At what age was SRE first taught and what topics were discussed?

**Daughter:** 10 or 11 at school, but me and my mum had talked earlier than that.

**Researcher:** Who initiated the discussion of SRE?

**Daughter:** I think I ask, but I think mum also does.

**Researcher:** If the parent, why do you think they told you about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** Just so I don't make a silly mistake because I didn't know something.

**Researcher:** Was it embarrassing to discuss sexual matters?

**Daughter:** No, it wasn't.

**Researcher:** After discussions, what aspects of SRE did you still want to know more about?

**Daughter:** It has always been enough.

**Researcher:** Who would you like to teach you about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** My mum and school.

**Researcher:** Why, what is the reason for this?

**Daughter:** I think the school give the facts, but then my mum just adds to it so I know what is what.

**Researcher:** Do you think that your pick things up from other peoples conversations regarding SRE?

**Daughter:** Yes, probably.

**Researcher:** What sorts of sexual matters do you discuss with friends?

**Daughter:** Yes, just the ones I am closest to.

**Researcher:** Are these friends of the same or opposite sex?

**Daughter:** Same-sex.

**Researcher:** What makes you want to talk to your friends about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** Because they are the same age as me and because I can I trust them.

**Researcher:** What aspects of SRE do you learn more about when talking to friends?

**Daughter:** I don't think I do really.

**Researcher:** Are there things that you would discuss with your friends that you would not discuss with your parents?

**Daughter:** No, not really I don't think.

**Researcher:** If yes, why and what sexual matters would these be? N/A.

**Researcher:** Do you think that your friends know more about SRE matters than you do?

**Daughter:** I think we all know the same really.

**Researcher:** Which parent do you mainly talk to about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** My mum.

**Researcher:** Why is it this parent (i.e. factors)?

**Daughter:** Just because we are really closer.

**Researcher:** Why do you think the mum teaches the most about SRE, rather than your father?

**Daughter:** I think it is to do with her being the same gender as me, she can probably relate more to what I am talking about.

**Researcher:** Would you prefer to discuss sexual matters with your other parent instead or as well?

**Daughter:** No, I just like to talk to my mum.

**Researcher:** Who initiates the conversations regarding sexual matters?

**Daughter:** Both.

**Researcher:** What SRE topics have your parents discuss with you, and at what age did these conversations occur?

**Daughter:** Probably before I went to secondary school.

**Researcher:** When and what circumstances are these conversations likely to occur?

**Daughter:** Anytime really when me and my mum are alone and when my brother isn't there.

**Researcher:** What topics do your parents NOT discuss with you concerning SRE?

**Daughter:** No, I think we talk about pretty much anything.

**Researcher:** Where do you think you will learn about the sexual matters if your parent's don't teach you?

**Daughter:** School and friends.

**Researcher:** Do you think your parent's have the most up-to-date SRE knowledge to teach you about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** Yes.

**Researcher:** Are there any restrictions on not discussing sexual matters within the family amongst yourselves?

**Daughter:** No, not really but I can't talk about some things in from of my brother because he is younger and interrupts the conversation.

**Researcher:** Do you feel that your family talk openly about sexual matters within the family?

**Daughter:** No really open, but I think I talk openly with my mum.

**Researcher:** How do you think other families communicate SRE, compared to yours?

**Daughter:** I think a lot of my friends are the same.

**Researcher:** Do you think in general more sex education is given to female children rather than male children?

**Daughter:** No, I think it is the same, but I think girls are warned more about why not to have sex.

**Researcher:** Some young males sometimes feel that fewer SRE matters are discussed with young females, but do you agree?

**Daughter:** No, I think we get given the same amount of information.

**Researcher:** At what age do you think your parents want you to know about sexual matters?

**Daughter:** I don't know really. Probably before school covers the information.

**Researcher:** Do the school involve your parents in the SRE you receive?

**Daughter:** No.

**Researcher:** Do you want your parents to have more involvement in the SRE you receive in school?

**Daughter:** Yes.

**Researcher:** If yes, how do you think the school could improve their approach to involving parents more?

**Daughter:** I think it would be better if parents were told more about what we are told at school.

**Researcher:** Would you prefer for sexual matters to be discussed more openly within the family?

**Daughter:** No, I am happy with the way things are.

**Researcher:** Would you have been as open answering these questions if your parents had been present?

**Daughter:** Yes, I think so.

**Researcher:** If yes, why?

**Daughter:** Because I feel I could say anything to them anyway.

**Researcher:** What main forms of the media (computers, magazines etc) do you use to learn about issues regarding SRE?

**Daughter:** Magazines, I think mainly.

**Researcher:** What sorts of things do you learn from these sources that you do not get taught about elsewhere?

**Daughter:** I think the problem pages make you more aware of what other young people have experienced.

**Researcher:** Do you prefer to use these sources to learn about SRE?

**Daughter:** I think a combination of my mum, school and the magazines.

**Daughter:** Simply so you can see it from the bigger picture.

**Researcher:** What impact do you think the media (computers, magazines, etc) has regarding the SRE that you learn?



**Daughter:** A big impact, especially on keeping yourself safe.

**Researcher:** Do you think the media act as a deterrent when showing the consequences and negativity associated with some sexual behaviours/issues?

**Daughter:** Yes, I think it can but it depends what it shows. If you read or see something where there is say like a teenage pregnancy, they show you all the negative stuff, but what I think they should be doing is saying don't let this happen to you and give people the option to think for themselves and give them the answers as to try and prevent it, not by using scare tactics, because I don't think that works, that just say '*Don't get caught-out*'.

**Researcher:** When reading magazines, watching TV, videos and other media types do you feel that you can relate to what you are reading about or watching?

**Daughter:** Sometimes with boys it can, but not always in other situations.

**Researcher:** When using the media to learn about SRE do you feel you learn more about the opposite sex?

**Daughter:** Yes.

**Researcher:** Do you feel more confident with the knowledge you have learnt when using the different media types?

**Daughter:** I think you are more confident in what not to do because it is giving you the information where you can make choices of your own and not make mistakes.

**Researcher:** Do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing?

**Daughter:** I think it is a good thing because it is making people more aware of issues that sometimes people don't discuss.

**Researcher:** Do you think the religious beliefs you have been brought up with influences the SRE you receive?

**Daughter:** No, I wouldn't say so.

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Daughter:** I thought it was good.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Daughter:** I liked the true and false section because it challenged you.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Daughter:** No, I thought it was really quite good even though I found the fly annoying in the beginning.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Daughter:** 14-16 years.

**Researcher:** Was there any aspect of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Daughter:** No.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Daughter:** I can't think of any off the top of my head.

**Researcher:** Would you prefer to talk to your parents rather than find out about SRE aspects by using the CD?

**Daughter:** Talk to my mum.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Daughter:** Yes, because I think it would make families talk about things if they found it uncomfortable.

Before leaving the mother and her daughter completed the post sexual knowledge questionnaire. The researcher went BACK ONE WEEK LATER and asked questions to gain clarity as to how the CD has broken down any barriers when discussing SRE within the family.

### **Follow-up interview with daughter**

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Daughter:** I think it was good in that it was informative and gave lots of other information that is sometimes not covered at school.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Daughter:** The quiz because it challenged what you already knew.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Daughter:** I liked it all.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Daughter:** About my age.

**Researcher:** Was there any aspect of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Daughter:** No.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Daughter:** When thinking about it I suppose the only topic on the CD that we haven't discussed in great detail is contraception and that is simply because I have not needed to talk to her (the mother) about it yet.

**Researcher:** Would you prefer to talk to your parents rather than find out about SRE aspects by using the CD?

**Daughter:** I think I would always just prefer to talk to my mum.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Daughter:** Yes, I think it would be useful for my brother to watch in about 6 months, because I think he would learn a lot from it.

### **Follow-up interview with parent**

**Researcher:** What did you think of the Sense CD?

**Mother:** After watching it again, I thought it was really good.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the Sense CD did you like the most, and why?

**Mother:** It covered so many things, but I thought it was good in the way the put the slant on the relationship in most of the aspects it covered.

**Researcher:** What aspects of the CD did you like the least?

**Mother:** I don't say I didn't like it, but the noises were very much for young people. At times I thought I was listening to the play-station which my son plays.

**Researcher:** What age group would you say the CD was most suited for?

**Mother:** I think the whole CD is good for young people about 14, but other bits could be introduced earlier if it was in a school setting.

**Researcher:** Was there any aspect of the CD that you felt uncomfortable watching as a family?

**Mother:** No.

**Researcher:** Were there any issues in the CD that you have not discussed as a family?

**Mother:** We have discussed all aspects I think, some more in detail than others.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the CD could be useful when discussing sexual matters within the family?

**Mother:** Yes, but I think like I said last week parents and their children should have the opportunity to watch it together and then cover aspects in greater detail at school, but also give the parent chance to discuss things with their child.

**Researcher:** As a parent do you feel you could talk openly with your child about all aspects raised within the CD or is there things on the CD you were not aware of as a parent?

**Mother:** No, I don't think so.

The mother and daughter completed the follow-up sexual knowledge questionnaire before being given a de-brief of the study and being thanked for their time.

**End of Interview.**